

WELCOME

Faisal Bin Muaammar
Secretary General KAICIID
Córdoba, 15th may 2019

As-salamu alaykum.

Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to greet you to say, “Welcome to Cordoba”, and to say to Jacques: thank you very much for organising this conference in this time of Ramadan. We are fasting, I thank you for this because we have to travel and when we travel, we can break our fast, so thank you very much for this. Anyway, Jacques, you did an amazing job, you know, to organise this event.

I prepared my formal speech, but I decided not to read it. I just want to say a couple of words before I finish my speech. Well, thank you, Jacques, and thank you all the partners and the organisers of this great meeting for bringing together all these people from 40 countries. And to be in Cordoba, we have to open the history books, and to learn, and to bring some examples of living together to all these people who cannot find the right way to live together.

Unfortunately, we are in a difficult time, and we need really to think about it. What happens to the world, the misuse of religion, the misuse of politics, and we are caught in between. Cordoba represents both the struggle and the reward of achieving Convivencia. This is a region where one civilisation after another has left their imprint through conquest and through collaboration.

What I can remember, as a Muslim, from this period is that wherever you go in the Islamic world, in every town, you will find the name of Cordoba, because they really appreciate the history of Cordoba. And this, for us to celebrate this day, with the United Nations deciding this is the day of Living Together in Peace, that is what we need, at this time. We, at KAICIID, are honoured to join you in organising this conference, and to participate and to be with all of our friends who are already sharing the same values.

I would like to thank the Cordoban, the Andalusian and the Spanish governments and to all who have welcomed us so warmly and, in particular the Municipality of Cordoba, which is hosting us in this elegant building tonight. It is my great hope, and one I share with many here, that this Forum is deemed a success. It will not be the last time we work together. I would like to give credit to the Foundation Paradigma Cordoba, which, since April 2018, has led 21 founding organisations to organise this Forum, and also we are grateful to all the 21 foundations, can we also salute them, because they really deserve it. Partners such as

Fondation Ousseimi and AISA International developed this idea many years ago. The Nicholas Puech Foundation galvanized the preparation process, Initiatives for Change International, thank you Imad, and the Scouts brought teams of young members and boundless enthusiasm, and have been joined by Salam for Cultural Communication, thank you Dr. Fahad, which is supporting an international event for the first time, coming outside the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

So we are, as I mentioned, a group of organizers who are deep believers of what is happening in Cordoba. I remember receiving all the emails from Jacques, and I always tell him: "Jacques, you are really a military leader. You can cross all the mountains of fear to the other side to build peace." And you did it, Jacques. So, I believe this time for us, with all the misuse of religion, the misuse of politics, when they want to build the mountains of fear and also to bring us down, to separate us from each other, so we will not let it continue. We are eager to do this project; KAICIID was established by the Kingdom of Spain, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Republic of Austria and the Holy See, as founding States, and we have a diverse board with Jewish, Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus; we have an advisory board representing 15 religious and ethnics groups. So, it is really very important for us to contribute and support this kind of project, because it is really in the heart of our business.

I would like again to thank, as I am speaking on behalf of all the partners, so it is really my duty to thank all of them, to thank the guests, and also to thank the youth, 30 of our youth are with us, and can we salute all of them? Because they are coming from far away, from 20 countries, representing more than 4 or 5 religions and ethnics groups. We are grateful to all of you because of what you did, and what I saw this morning, it is really a great message to the whole world: that we can live together, and we can support each other, from wherever we are. So Jacques, and our brothers and sisters in building this Forum, I can assure you of our support, and we will talk to the government of Spain through their members in KAICIID, and to whoever is entrusted to guarantee that this Forum continue and do its mission to build peace around the world.

Thank you very much.