

**Statement by Said Ahmed NUR**  
**Honorable Minister of Education, Puntland State of SOMALIA**  
**At the First Islamic Ministerial Conference on the Child**  
**Held in the Kingdom of Morocco, Rabat 7-9 November, 2005.**

Chairperson, Excellencies, distinguished ladies and gentlemen

I bring you all very sincere greetings from the Somali people. I also bring you their heartfelt hopes that decisions at this conference and actions that will follow from it will in many ways contribute to already engaged and on-going processes of reconciliation, recovery and development for all Somalis in general and the Somali child in particular.

Chairperson, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, as you are all no doubt well aware, the Somali experience in the last 15 years has been one of conflict, instability, insecurity and internal strife. A whole generation of Somali children has thus grown up knowing nothing but war and displacement and the consequence has been major violations of their rights and the loss/compromise of their childhoods. Conflict and insecurity have meant that for vast majorities of Somali children, access to education, to proper basic health care, to water and sanitation, to protective and secure environments and to food security has been denied with major damaging effects on the development. Understandably, the Somali child is at the bottom of the ladder on all globally accepted indicators of development – Gross Enrolment Rate, Under Five Mortality Rate and the Human Development Index.

Excellencies, Chairperson, ladies and gentlemen, all the Somali governments and administrations in general and the Puntland State of Somalia in particular which I serve as the Minister of Education now consider these low indicators of development as unacceptable and are now committed to positive active and strategic social services investments, within the limitations of our very limited financial and human resources to correcting these.

The Somalis and their leaderships are now committed to improving access to basic social services and to creating the necessary enabling environments and policy frameworks to reverse these unacceptable indicators guided by a vision and resolve to launch the Somalis on the paths of development.

Excellencies, Chairperson, ladies and gentlemen, we are in particular committed to policies that will enable children to develop. We are committed to policies that protect children and their precious childhood. Our vision is one of healthy children and youths equipped with life skills for effective living in a world now plagued by the HIV pandemic. We believe and are putting in place measures to ensure for every Somali child the right to quality basic education, to an education that equips each and every child with the skills of tolerance, understanding and acceptance of the other and that ultimately enables that child to acquire and practice a culture of peace.

Your Excellencies, Chairperson, ladies and Gentlemen, the Somali people are just emerging from a long and painful period of conflict that virtually destroyed most of our social infrastructure and which therefore imposes major limitations on our abilities to follow through with our visions and dreams for the Somali child. Yet our commitment to improving the lives of children and our future generation remains firm

and unwavering even as we recognize these limitations. It is for this reason that I bring to this conference the earnest and strong appeal of all Somali children to the international community, to the OIC and to ISESCO to come to their assistance and help rebuild their country and restore their hopes for the future.

The Somalis look up to you as we struggle to rebuild our society and to restore basic social services. We appeal to all for support – by helping us invest in our children, you will be co-partners with us in creating a world fit for all Somali children.

Mr. Chairperson, your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, I thank you for your kind attention.