

Biography of Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu

(Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference)

Professor **Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu** of Turkey has been the first by-vote-elected Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Ever since he took the office as the ninth Secretary General in January 2005, he has provided strong leadership to the 57 member states organization and espoused the cause of the Muslim world in these difficult times.

On various occasions in the past, he has proposed measures to strengthen the world peace and to forge solidarity among the global Muslim community. He has taken serious steps to make the OIC as an effective organization. His effort to strengthen the OIC has been lauded by many heads of state and government and received recognition by the media and masses who had witnessed him responding to the challenges faced by the Muslims.

Prof. Dr. Ihsanoglu has pioneered activities relating to research, publishing, and organized congresses in various fields, including history of arts and sciences, and intercultural relations. He has channeled research findings towards creating awareness about Islamic culture across the world. He has initiated and supervised reconstruction programs for the protection and promotion of the written and the architectural heritage of Islamic civilization in various countries. He has contributed to scholarly debates on intercultural dialogues. With his institutional and personal initiatives, he has earned recognition at intellectual circles as a leading contributor to rapprochement between cultures, particularly between the Muslim and Western worlds.

He has unrelentingly, since his association with the OIC from 1980 as founding Director General of the Research Centre for Islamic History, Culture and Arts (IRCICA) in Istanbul, endeavoured to promote a better knowledge and understanding of Islam, its cultures and civilization in the west and throughout the world. By means of objective studies, have argued how the common denominators between the civilizations could be the reason for building globally inter-faith and inter-cultural understanding than projecting discord. Well known in the western and eastern academia and scholarly circles as a man of letters, he has been associated since four decades with the leading institutions in the Muslim countries and the west. He views with pride the strong sides of the Muslim world but objectively lays out how urgently the Muslim world requires socio-economic reforms to reach the path of progress and to distribute the benefits of development to the common man. He never hesitates and ardently supports the rights of the Muslim minorities and respect for human rights globally, which he passionately advocated both in his writings and speeches.

Prof. Dr. Ihsanoglu was born in Cairo, Egypt on 26.12.1943. He received his B.S. in 1966 and master's degree in chemistry in 1970 at Ain Shams University, Cairo. After completing his Ph.D. studies at Ankara University, Turkey in 1974, he did his post-doctoral research from 1975 to 1977 as a research fellow at University of Exeter, the United Kingdom.

He served as a faculty member in faculties of science and then became the first professor and founding Head of the Department of History of Science of Istanbul University. He is also the founding Chairman of Turkish Society for History of Science (TBTK) and ISAR Foundation. He further served as the President of International Union of History and Philosophy of Science (IUHPS) between 2001 and 2005. He is member of various international societies; scientific councils, advisory boards of numerous academies, centres and institutes, and editorial boards of many journals existing in Egypt, France, Germany, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Tunisia, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

He wrote numerous books, articles and papers in Turkish, English and Arabic on science, history of science, Islamic culture, Turkish culture, relations between the Muslim world and the Western world, and Turkish-Arab relations, some of which were translated into Russian, French, Japanese, Malay, Korean and Bosnian.

He was conferred with the "Medal of Glory" by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the "Medal of Distinction of the First Order" by the President of Arab Republic of Egypt, the "Independence Medal of the First Order" by the King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the "Medal of Glory" by the President of the Russian Federation (presented by the President of the Republic of Tatarstan), the "Commandeur de l'Ordre National du Mérite" (National Commander of the Merit Order) and the "Commandeur de l'Ordre National du Lion" (Commander of the Lion National Order Award) by the President of the Republic of Senegal and the "Medal of Distinguished State Service" by the President of the Republic of Turkey. He also received "The World Prize for the Book of the Year", from President Seyed Mohammad Khatemi, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 2000. He has been conferred with honorary doctorates by a number of universities in Azerbaijan, Bosnia Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Italy, the Russian Federation, Tatarstan, Turkey and the United States. He was also appointed "Ambassador at Large" by the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1997.

He is fluent in Turkish, English and Arabic languages and has a working knowledge in French and Persian. He is married and father of three young men.