

# SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

## 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Islam and Higher Education (Kuantan, Pahang, 1-2 October 2012)

*Michael K. Scott, IAIS Malaysia*

The 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Islam and Higher Education (“3<sup>rd</sup> ICIHE”) took place 1-2 October 2012 at the Pahang State Foundation Complex in Kuantan, Pahang State, Malaysia. Over 25 conference papers focused the minds of conferees – hailing from a multitude of countries in South and Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Africa, Africa, Australia, Europe and the Americas – upon discovering the best means of empowering Muslim communities to manage and advance private higher education efforts throughout the world. These papers articulated the over-arching theme of the conference and explored it in depth: *The Role of Awqaf* (religious endowments) *in the Development of Islamic Higher Education: Past, Present and Future Prospects*.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> ICIHE, while building upon the cumulative efforts of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> ICIHE, effectively increased the number of participants, expanded the diversity of their national and linguistic origins and sharpened the collective focus. That sharper focus was the close relationship between Islam’s vision of knowledge and its practice, as reflected in the institution of *waqf* (religious endowment). Participants were given a clear working brief to clarify the demonstrable linkages between theory and practice. In his opening remarks, Conference Chairman Emeritus Professor Osman Bakar welcomed the conferees, stressing that such a marriage of theory and practice would be the central objective of the conference, a priority that was shared, he observed, by the sponsoring Pahang State Foundation, IAIS Malaysia, IKIP International College, and the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) East Asia as well as in the personal interest and commitment of His Excellency Dr Adnan Yaakob, Chief Minister of Pahang, and Chairman of the Pahang State Foundation.

The conference aimed to “study our past history to learn important lessons for our lives today, and to take the best from our history and tradition and also from contemporary knowledge,” Professor Bakar emphasised. In his address, Founding Chairman and CEO of IAIS Malaysia Professor Mohammad Hashim Kamali thanked the sponsors for their continued commitment and support while urging the speakers and presenters to come up with actionable policy recommendations for decision makers in the government and industry. He confirmed IAIS Malaysia’s readiness to continue as the main academic sponsor of ICIHE for the fourth year running.

In discussing “*Waqf* in Shariah and its Contemporary Applications”, Professor Kamali underlined the extent to which *waqf* has played a key role in transfer of wealth from the wealthy to the needy, possibly even more substantial than that of alms-giving, or *zakat*. Throughout the conference proceedings, many examples were presented of ways in which the Islamic vision of universal enfranchisement resulted in phenomenal growth in the Muslim community and its institutions of higher learning, through the workings of the institution of religious endowment, or *waqf*.

Conference organisers had jointly put together an impressive programme spanning seven working sessions, with diverse specialist presenters in each session. Participants, whatever their specialisation or their origin, had been urged to make an effort to think of themselves as all being members of the global *ummah*. “We are all one body today, and the issue of *awqaf* is an issue for entire *ummah*,” Professor Bakar had stressed, adding that continuity and perseverance were key requirements to the success of any venture of the *ummah*, and acknowledging the 3<sup>rd</sup> ICIHE participants and guests for their contribution to the ICIHE in its third iteration. In a communication received subsequent to the close of the 3<sup>rd</sup> ICIHE, the University of Brunei Darussalam conveyed to Pahang State Foundation and IAIS Malaysia its formal interest in joining the other ICIHE sponsors as a permanent co-organiser of future conferences.

And turning to the future, in his farewell remarks Professor Bakar announced that employability of university graduates and leadership development would be a likely theme for the 4<sup>th</sup> ICIHE which would be held in November 2013 in the city of Madinah, in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in cooperation with the Madinah Institute for Leadership and Entrepreneurship and its CEO, Dr Mohamed Moustafa Mahmoud. The latter presented the closing special address of 3<sup>rd</sup> ICIHE, paving the way for achieving the required continuity and convening 4<sup>th</sup> ICIHE in Madinah.

**Annual Conference of the Legislative Council of  
the Judiciary of Malaysia  
(Kota Bharu, Kelantan, 8-12 July 2012)**

*Mohammad Hashim Kamali, IAIS Malaysia*

The 46<sup>th</sup> Legislative Council of the Judiciary of Malaysia met on 8-12 July 2012 in Kota Baru, Kelantan in the course of its annual conference. On this occasion, Chief Justice of Malaysia Tun Arifin Zakaria requested IAIS CEO and Founder Professor Mohammad Hashim Kamali to address an audience of 126 judges