

Call to eradicate mass illiteracy in Islamic states

JEDDAH Nov. 15.—The 12th session of Islamic Commission for Economic, Social and Cultural Affairs which began here on Monday concluded Wednesday issuing a report containing recommendations for further consideration and formal adoption by the Islamic Foreign Ministers at their forthcoming 16th annual session scheduled to be held in Morocco next January, reports IINA.

The Commission, a specialized body of the Organization of Islamic Conference, examined the reports by the OIC Secretariat and the various Islamic agencies and centers working in the economic, social and cultural spheres during 1984. The panel also discussed and formulated recommendations regarding the activities proposed to be launched by the OIC agencies next year.

Delegates from the 44 member states, held several sessions which lasted until midnight, to reach consensus on subjects ranging from the Islamic states' position on global economic issues to the Islamic University in Uganda and the setting up of an international Muslim Women's organization in Islamabad, Pakistan.

The commission, chaired by a senior foreign ministry official, established two subcommittees, headed by Turkey and Guinea to tackle the elaborate agenda containing over 35 items dealing with the economic, social and cultural conditions of the Islamic world and identifying guidelines and specific measures for collective action for responding to common questions.

The recommendations evolved during the three days of deliberations include suggestions for closer consultations among the OIC states for formulating common stands on global economic and financial matters to be pursued through consultations under the aegis of multilateral agencies and forums. Most Islamic states agree on the need for a just and equitable international economic order which would ameliorate the plight of the least developed states and enable the other developing countries to rapidly move toward the stage of economic takeoff. They called for immediate measures to reduce the burgeoning external debt burden of the developing states to provide

essential financial assistance to the poor states to enable them to import capital goods and technical know-how and to abolish the protectionist measures adopted by the industrialised countries which cripple the developing states' efforts to break the vicious circle of poverty, ignorance and disease.

They agreed to put up to the forthcoming Islamic Foreign Ministers Conference a number of proposals for augmenting economic and commercial relations among Islamic states which would enable them to withstand the adverse effects of global economic situation and pave the way for the emergence of a dynamic self-reliant and mutually supportive Islamic economic community. These proposals focus on boosting industrial investments, joint venture projects, commercial exchanges and sharing of technical, scientific and technological experiences and expertise.

In the cultural field, the Commission agreed upon a series of programmes and measures to strengthen and expand the various OIC specialized agencies and Islamic universities in several member states including Pakistan, Bangladesh, Niger, Guinea, Benin and Uganda, so as to enable them to promote educational and cultural progress in the Islamic world. The Commission stressed the need for concerted move to meet the educational and cultural requirements of Muslims in poor Islamic states as well as those in non-Islamic countries. The panel urged the initiation of systematic efforts to stamp out the scourge of mass illiteracy rampant in many Islamic states which has impeded socio-economic progress.

It voiced serious concern over the growing financial crisis afflicting the OIC institutions.