

Statement of H.E. Professor Ihsanoglu at the second meeting of the Syrian people's group of friends

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ISTANBUL, 1 APRIL 2012 Excellency, Prof. Ahmet Davutoğlu Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, Excellencies, the Ministers, Excellency, the Secretary General of the Arab League Ladies and Gentlemen, Allow me at the outset to express my pleasure for participating in this second meeting of the “Group of Friends of the Syrian People” here in Istanbul. I would like to commend the Government of Turkey for hosting this important meeting which convenes on the heels of the first meeting held in Tunisia on 24 February 2012. We are gathered today as the violence in Syria continues unabated with dim prospects for a peaceful resolution in spite of the tremendous efforts made by the international community to end the bloodshed in Syria and bring the relentless cycle of violence to an end. Excellencies, Ladies & Gentlemen As I mentioned in my statement at the Tunis Meeting, the OIC is ready to contribute to all efforts and initiatives approved by the Group of Friends of the Syrian People. Our endeavors are slated to work out a peaceful solution to the crisis in Syria through the cessation of bloodshed of innocent people and attainment of the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people for democracy, good governance and respect for human rights. Since the eruption of the crisis in Syria over a year ago, we have consistently expressed our deep concern at the deteriorating situation and urged the Syrian authorities to shun excessive use of force against civilians, and comply with the obligations laid down in the OIC Charter, in order to avert the risk of foreign intervention, with the attendant consequences that threaten security and stability in Syria and the rest of the region. Today, the situation seems to take a more dramatic turn, as violence grows on and the death toll increases with every passing day. We have at

the same time stressed the imperative of safe guarding Syria's security, stability, sovereignty and territorial integrity and the need to engage in a positive dialogue that should involve the various Syrian stakeholders for the sake of sparing the country and the wider region a catastrophic deflagration with unpredictable ramifications. To that end, we reiterate today our support to the mission of Mr. Kofi Annan, the UN-Arab League envoy. We express the hope that the acceptance of the Syrian authorities of the Six Points proposed by him, will be followed by a real political will from the Syrian government to concretely and immediately implement this initiative. I just participated in the Arab League Summit held in Baghdad and reiterated the support of the OIC to the regional and international efforts aiming at finding a peaceful solution to the Syrian crisis, and expressed our readiness to continue to participate in these efforts, including the decisions adopted by the Baghdad Summit. Excellencies, Ladies & Gentlemen As the crisis in Syria seems to move from bad to worse as a result of unceasing violence, the humanitarian situation of thousands of refugees and displaced people exacerbates, and therefore we call upon the international community to act promptly and resolutely by scaling up collective humanitarian efforts, including the provision of material and medical support for the refugees and displaced people, both in Syria and the neighboring countries. The OIC has succeeded to dispatch, jointly with the United Nations, a humanitarian mission which has just ended its assessment of the humanitarian needs in different Syrian provinces, and sent a first convoy of nine trucks carrying relief products to the population of these regions. We at the OIC support a political solution that would adequately respond to the demands of the Syrian people and ensure that the peace and security in the region are sustained. This can be achieved only through the twin tools of diplomatic pressure and dialogue with all stakeholders to compel the Syrian leadership to take bold decisions for the interest of the country and its citizens. We strongly urge the Syrian opposition to unify its ranks and continue to engage an all-inclusive political dialogue aiming at defining common strategy for building a democratic Syria open to all its citizens without exclusion or discrimination.

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