

into which the works of Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, Ibn Rushd, Ibn al-Haytham were translated. Politically, on the other hand, there are Islamic scholars who have already been writing in English, such as Fazlur Rahman, Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Ismail Faruqi, who were based abroad because the situation back in their homeland was not conducive to Islamic scholarship. Indeed, Pitsuwana was introduced to Abdullah Yusuf Ali by Muhsin Mahdi, a student of the philosopher Leo Strauss and an émigré scholar, who was symbolic of this scenario facing Muslims. Great Islamic scholars had to migrate because their own Muslim countries had become un-conducive to research with controversial ideas. That situation made, and continues to make, English an important language for the communication of new Islamic ideas.

**Book Launch and Panel Discussion – ‘Defining Islamic Statehood:
Measuring and Indexing Contemporary Muslim States’
(IAIS Malaysia, 31 March 2016)**

Ahmad Badri Abdullah

On 31 March 2016, IAIS Malaysia hosted a book launch event for Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf, founder and Chairman of The Cordoba Initiative, who had published a new book entitled ‘*Defining Islamic Statehood: Measuring and Indexing Contemporary Muslim States*’. The book was launched by Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, the former Prime Minister of Malaysia and Chairman of IAIS Malaysia. In his speech, Tun Abdullah congratulated Imam Feisal for his success in bringing to fruition such an important project to provide realistic and practical guidelines on Islamic governance and statehood for the Ummah in the 21st century. Imam Feisal in turn thanked Tun Abdullah, as well as Dato’ Seri Najib Tun Razak, the current Malaysian Prime Minister, for their patronage and endorsement of the project. He highlighted the fact that the project required a stellar working group comprising notable Muslim scholars, policymakers, and court judges. He pointed out as well that the project’s mission was to find a consensus regarding the definition of an Islamic state in the context of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) in order to develop qualitative yardsticks for measuring the Islamicity of Muslim states. It was therefore a convergence of Islamic methodologies and scientific measurements.

Furthermore, the index developed in the project focuses on the degree of deliverables, measured against the five essentials of *maqasid al-shari’ah*, principles that have been unanimously agreed upon by Muslim scholars. The project utilised data provided by governments, supported by polling data in the

pursuit of evaluating the current state of Muslim nations. In his closing remarks, Imam Feisal stressed that the book is in fact a stepping-stone for a living and ongoing project.

The speech was followed by a panel discussion, in which Prof. Mohammad Hashim Kamali pointed out that the concept of state in Islam, even though the Qur'an does not ordain any tangible model of governance, primarily involves overarching principles such as public benefit and welfare (*maslahah*), consultation (*shura*), justice ('*adl*) and accountability (*amanah*). Therefore, presenting *maqasid al-shari'ah* as the core values of the new index, as well as the qualitative benchmark of a state, are laudable steps taken by the project. The discussion was followed by a question and answer session.

Inaugural Responsible Finance Summit (Sasana Kijang, Kuala Lumpur, 30 - 31 March 2016)

Tawfique Al-Mubarak

Bank Negara Malaysia, the central bank of Malaysia, recently hosted the inaugural Responsible Finance Summit (RFS) at their headquarters in Kuala Lumpur on 30th and 31st March, 2016. The event was jointly organised by the Responsible Finance Institute (RFI) Foundation and Middle East Global Advisors.

Keynote speeches from two versatile leaders and advocates of responsible finance marked the opening of the summit on the first day. In her keynote speech, outgoing Governor of Bank Negara Malaysia, Tan Sri Zeti Akhtar Aziz, highlighted the importance of financial inclusion, and mentioned how responsible finance could connect the more than 2 billion adults who are currently excluded from any formal banking services. She remarked that the summit is an opportunity to unite in rebuilding trust and in providing the foundations of more stable and sustainable long-term economic growth. The second keynote speech was delivered by George Kell, the Vice Chairman of Arabesque Partner and Founder and former Executive Director of UN Global Compact. He emphasised that environmental stewardship, social responsibility, and good governance of the corporations are essential to promote responsible investments. Besides, recent research by Oxford University and Arabesque Partners concludes that sustainable and responsible investment and profit making can mutually co-exist.

The second day marked its opening with a powerful keynote address by His Royal Highness, Emir Muhammadu Sanusi II, Emir of Kano State in Nigeria. Also the former Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, the Emir was listed as one of the 100 most influential persons in 2011. In his keynote speech, he