



**Hisham Mortada**  
**Keynote Speaker ICIAA2011**

**Abstract**

**The Dilemma of Continuity and Change of Old Muslim City**

The sources of Islamic *Sharia* have set up principles for Muslims' life. These principles come in two frameworks. The first is social while the other is physical. The principles of these two frameworks have led to the creation of old Muslim city. Indeed, old Muslim cities such as Damascus, Fez, Cairo, Isfahan, etc. show great similarities in their physical aspects and socio-cultural atmosphere.

Since the beginning of the Twentieth century that was associated with technological, cultural and economic changes, old Muslim city started to lose its identity. Some cities have suffered from negligence, deterioration, and rejection while others have been completely replaced with modern urban and architectural setup. Nonetheless, in recent decades, there have been examples of excellent urban and architectural preservation of some old Muslim cities. The forces behind that have been purely economic. Despite such efforts, many old Muslim cities are still on the way to disappear. Without strong measures collectively made by local public and private institutions, old Muslim cities throughout the Muslim world will vanish.

## **Bio Data**

Professor Hisham Mortada is a critic, educator and researcher in the field of design and planning of built environment. As a professor of architecture, he teaches Islamic architecture and urban environment at King Abdul Aziz University, Saudi Arabia.

He is also an adjunct professor at Berlin University, Germany. He holds a Masters of Architecture from Pennsylvania State University; US, and a Ph.D. of Architecture from Edinburgh University; UK.

Prof. Mortada is widely published, and topics of his research vary from traditional architecture and sustainable development to old Muslim city and Islamic heritage of built environment. Promoting the design and planning principles of the tradition of Islam as a means to solve problems of contemporary built environment, Prof. Mortada has lectured in more than thirty countries, and his book "Traditional Islamic Principles of Built Environment" has been well received.

He is currently involve in research projects in the US, Germany, Yemen, Ethiopia, and Saudi Arabia. Some of these projects, particularly the ones in developing countries, aim to assist poor communities in creating better urban environment that empowers society and establish socio-economic justice.