



منظمة التعاون الإسلامي

ORGANISATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION
ORGANISATION DE COOPÉRATION ISLAMIQUE

Jeddah Document

Of the International Conference on Women in Islam

Status and Empowerment

22-24 Rabi Akhar 1445 AH

6-8 November 2023 AC

Under the gracious auspices of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman Ibn Abdul Aziz Al Saud, King of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in the broad presence of Member States of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the participation of Sharia scholars and international experienced experts and researchers on women, the General Secretariat of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, in collaboration with other organs of the OIC (the International Islamic Fiqh Academy and the Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission and the Women Development Organization.) submitted this comprehensive reference document of the International Conference on Women in Islam, held from 22 to 24 Rabi Akhar 1445 AH, 6 to 8 November 2023 AC, in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, under the theme “Women: Status and Empowerment”; in line with the discussions held at the Conference, expressing sincere appreciation and gratitude to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for hosting the Conference, referring to the resolutions of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the 49th session of the Council of Foreign Ministers held in Nouakchott on 16 and 17 March 2023 and the other ministerial resolutions affirming the vital role of women in the Muslim world and the importance of exchanging insights and sharing experiences on this issue, as well as the prominence of women and their empowerment.

We:

Inspired by the principles of Islam, its solid and lasting legislations, the holistic inclusive decent lifestyle, granted to every human being, male and female, through their rights and duties, preserving women’s dignity and granting equality with their male brothers, in spirit and soul. Allah Almighty said: “O mankind, fear your Lord Who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women” (Al-Nissaa: 1). Allah Almighty said: “O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is most Knowing and Acquainted” (Al-Hujuraat: 13);

Reiterating that Islam has granted women full rights and bestowed upon them a crucial importance and a significant place in the family and the community, ensured them care and education, provided them with safety and protection; any practices contrary to the above do not belong to Islam in anyway;

Understanding the prominence of Quran texts and Hadiths alike, the good practices in Muslim communities that fostered women status, maintained their rights, their eligibility for mandate and responsibility and preserved their dignity and humanity;

Inspired by the women's engagement since the time of the Prophet in community development and nation building, their contribution in education, nursing, medicine, trade and all aspects of nation and community management; indeed, the biography of mothers of believers is full of examples and attest to that; their leadership of august houses of knowledge, literature, fatwa and volunteering, namely the wives and daughters of Prophet Mohammad - may Allah be pleased with them - to date;

Based on the principles and objectives of the Charter of the OIC, calling for increasing basic human rights and freedoms and their protection, including women's rights, maintaining the Muslim family values, enhancing their role, development and protection as the normal and core unit in the community;

Inspired by the Resolutions made by the OIC in the various sessions of the Islamic Summit and the Council of Foreign Ministers, notably the outcomes of the sessions of the 8 sessions of the OIC Ministerial Conference on Women since its inception in 2006 and until 2021, and most recently the 8th session of the Ministerial Conference on Women of the OIC Member States, held from 6 to 8 July 2021 and the Cairo Declaration made by the session, as well as the Resolution 37/2-A.C on establishing a specialized organization for women development in the OIC Member States, by the 36th session of the Council of Foreign Ministers, held in Jeddah, and Jeddah Declaration made by the 1st session of the OIC Ministerial Conference on Marriage institution, family and preserving their values in the OIC Member States, hosted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on 8 & 9 February 2017, and the "OIC 2025 Work Program", attaching a priority to promoting women, their empowerment, family welfare and social security; moreover, the importance attached by the OIC bodies and institutions in charge of women empowerment, the responsibility bestowed by the OIC Member States upon preserving the rights, developing the capacity and providing the best conducive conditions for women's advancement and to overcome the problems they are facing;

Guided by the "OIC Plan of Action for the Advancement of women" (APA AW) adopted by the 2nd session of the Conference on Women held in Cairo on 24 & 25 November 2008, as refined and equipped with implementation mechanisms at the 6th session of the Ministerial Conference on Women held in Istanbul from 1 to 3 November 2016, regarded as a fully-fledged road map for the promotion of women in Muslim communities;

Appreciating the fatwas and Resolutions made by the International Islamic Fiqh Academy since its inception, on women and women empowerment, including the attribution and branching of new issues on women according to

the goals of tolerant Sharia, texts of the Quran and the noble Sunna.

Guided by the relevant international covenants, agreements and declarations reaffirming the status of women and their humanitarian, social and cultural worth, including the United Nations Charter that reiterates the faith in fundamental human rights, the individual dignity and instinct. In addition to the Universal Human Rights Declaration that affirms the principle of non-discrimination, including discrimination between men and women, and that every human being has the right to enjoy freedom, rights and equality in terms of dignity;

Reiterating the statement of the “Makkah Al-Mukkaramah Document” by Makkah Al-Mukkaramah Conference organized by League Of Islamic World under the theme “Principles of moderation in the Quran and Sunna” at the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from 22 to 24 Ramadan 1440 AH, 27 to 29 May 2019 AC, signed by more than 1200 muftis and scholars representing all schools and cults of Islam, approved by the OIC in November 2020 through the Council of Foreign Ministers of the OIC Member States, during its 47th session, providing in paragraph 25 that: “Legitimate empowerment of women according to a framework that preserves the hudud of Allah Almighty: Is their right that should not be surpassed by marginalizing their role, humiliating, belittling women or hampering the opportunities of women, whether in religion, knowledge, political or social affairs, among others, mainly in holding their well-deserved positions without any discrimination against her, including: Equal pay and opportunities, according to their nature, the standards of efficiency and equity; precluding such justice: Is a crime against women in particular and the communities in general”;

Recognizing the efficiency and the role of women, and the relevance of their full engagement in the decision-making mechanism, the enactment of legislations and policies, holding top and leading positions, their active contribution to the inclusive development process in the OIC States, and that they constitute a building and persistence pillar of the family institution and the community well-being;

Supporting the sustainable legitimate women empowerment, men and women equality in terms of rights and duties, to education, training, work environment, pay, subsidies and aids, access to all health services, taking advantage of the judiciary bodies, non-discrimination in local legislations of the Member States; Supporting the great efforts exerted by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Member States in the area of sustainable women empowerment and the promotion of her upscaled presence at all levels and areas, the development of

legislations and laws that promote women empowerment and maintain their status and dignity in Muslim communities;

Appreciating the amendments and updates made to the national legislations in the OIC Member States, that enhance the women status;

Recognizing that in spite of the inclusive and clear provisions set by Islam to protect women and maintain their rights, their social status and legal position, they were spared from unjust habits and obsolete traditions and some unfair norms in many communities; women were not also spared from men's absolute power under some wrong traditions and malpractices that dehumanize women and strip them of their basic rights to education and choosing their partner in life, which requires reconsideration of some outdated practices and traditions that are wrongfully attached to Islam;

Refusing all attempts to misrepresent Islam with regards women issues and bidding on them;

Approve the principles below in addressing Muslim women's causes and rights:

1. The Quran and Sunna are the two main sources of women's rights; The Saint Quran and the Noble Sunna are the consistent and lasting legislative source with regards all matters related to the Muslim's life and the Muslim community; they are the fundamental reference for women's status, rights, duties and all women's issues in Islam, which requires a review of all habits, norms, traditions and practices in every age against such sources to check their affiliation to Islam, which also requires referral with regards any new issues and matters related to women to figure out the appropriate legitimate provisions, taking into account the good development of the communities.

2. Women's dignity is established by the revelation and the Prophet's legacy in practice, words and deeds: The Holy Quran and the Sunna contain many provisions that pay tribute to women and identify their worth and status in the community. Allah Almighty said: "O mankind, fear your Lord Who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women" (An-Nissaa: 1]. Allah Almighty said: "O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is most Knowing and Acquainted" [Al-Hujuraat: 13].

3. Equality of men and women is inclusive: Islam considers women as sisters of men, they complement men, they are their partners, they have the rights men enjoy and the duties men have. Allah Almighty said: (And due to the wives is similar to what that is expected from them, according to what is reasonable)

(Al-Baqara: 228). The Noble Prophet - may peace and prayers of Allah be upon him - in hadith of Aicha: (Women are sisters of men) (Narrated by Abou Dawood); they equal in their eligibility to divine tribute, in respect to legitimate provisions related to faith, worship, dealings, offenses, responsibility and penalty; the different biological structure of men and women does not deny their equal rights and duties.

4. Women's rights in Islam are permanent: The clear provisions and established rights approved by Islam are lasting and valid for all times and places, they are an extension to the validity of the Sharia and its principles in Islam, which means that it is not admissible to make any amendment, alteration, disruption, use, abuse, expropriation of any of these rights, as they are established provisions and rights by Allah Almighty. Hence, Islam is acquitted of all selective interpretations and voluntary explanations of such provisions and rights; as these would deeply distort the women's status in Islam and would confiscate their rights, or some of the established rights, in addition to the resulting wrong and unfair practices against women.

5. Promotion of women's role as an integral part of the mankind celebration project: Women in Islam are mothers, sisters, daughters, paternal aunts and maternal aunts, wives and partners of men in assuming the responsibilities of life. Allah Almighty assigned women, alongside men, to carry out the task of succession on earth, to bring up the children and raise them well, they were empowered according to a framework that respects the hudud (limits) of Allah Almighty as their rights, and no one may bypass them by sidelining their role, humiliating, belittling them or hindering their chances, whether in religion, knowledge, politics or social affairs, among others, especially holding well deserved ranks without discrimination against them, including equal pay and opportunities, based on efficiency standards and fair equity among all.

6. Divine tribute to women prohibits any humiliation or intrusion against her: Islam paid tribute to women and bestowed on them all deserved rights to become an active element in the community; Islam surrounded women with some protective legislations, taking into account their physiological and psychological specificity; such as the provisions of cover and clothes, guardianship and alimony, where all these are surrounded with a solid moral fence based on decency and chastity; any humiliation, abuse or commercialization of women in any form being prohibited. Allah Almighty said: (And do not compel your slave girls to prostitution, if they desire chastity, to seek (thereby) the temporary interests of worldly life) (An-Noor: 33). Accordingly, Islam prohibited prostitution, immorality and nudity, and anything that is likely to insinuate physical and

psychological abuse of women.

7. Education: In both parts: religious and secular, at all levels: school and college, of all types: arts, science and technical. Islam ensured women the right to education to be able to acquire skills, knowledge, values and principles that can help them worship Allah Almighty and build the universe; they are essential to improve life, achieve happiness in this world and hereafter, they are a means to enhance individuals and communities. Hence, Quran and Sunna made learning and education mandatory, making no distinction between males and females, or between the areas of education: religious or secular. Allah Almighty said: (Allah will raise those who have believed among you and those who were given knowledge, by degrees) (Al-Mujadela: 11). Almighty said: (Say: Are those who know equal to those who do not know?) (Al-Zumar: 9). Prophet Mohammad - prayers and peace of Allah Almighty be upon him - said: Seeking knowledge is the duty of every Muslim. (Narrated by El-Termezey and Ibn Magah). Several women believers were known for their knowledge at the time of Prophet Mohammad - prayers and peace of Allah Almighty be upon him - and thereafter. They were interpreters, jurists, reciters of poems and news, knowledgeable in genealogy; women under Islam were blessed with their right to education and tapped all sciences, they contributed historically to the rise, pioneering and prosperity of the community. In modern age, several women held high-level positions across political, economic and social fields.

8. Employment: featuring intellectual, cultural, economic and political engagement, as well as any activity that is likely to enable the contribution to urbanize the universe, which is a joint responsibility of men and women, catering for the community; Islam ensured women the right to work if they so wish and the right to hold public offices whenever they have the qualifications required for such offices. Prophet Mohammad - prayers and peace of Allah Almighty be upon him - said: (No one has ever eaten food better than the fruit of his own work) (Narrated by Al-Bokhary). The States need to maintain equal opportunities for women at all sectors, according to their qualifications and potential; they need to catalyze their talents and build their capacity to contribute to the community development. Islam made no obstacles to women's work in any field whatsoever, as long as it is in compliance with common decency of Islam. Hence, Islam did not prohibit women's employment in trade, by selling and buying, and in all aspects of public administration and community leadership.

9. The independent legal personality: Islam ensured women their rights and their legal independence; they have the right to tenure, entering into contracts, recourse to courts and fair trial; as well as women's right to judicial and legal

regimes, namely: Inheritance, barrister, civil status, financial independence, legal responsibility vis-à-vis their properties, the right of disposal and full undisputed freedom to use their funds and all belongings within the legitimate limits. It ensured them the right to litigate and to lift any injustice that may be inflicted to them. It provided equality between men and women with regards the right to ownership and disposal thereof; it established their right to ownership of all types and to dispose of their funds legitimately. The distinct and free financial disclosure of Muslim women is the oldest among all peoples and civilizations. Islam banned men from taking women's funds, wholly or partly, without their consent. They are not required legally to bear any of men's expenses even if women were wealthy; men, guardians or husbands, may not infringe on women's funds or properties under the name of testament or seizure, or under any other name. Islam also ensured her the right to mobility and travel.

10. Ownership and acquisition: Islam guaranteed to women the right to ownership, acquisition and to perform any lucrative activities. It ensured them their rights according to the public order provided for in the dealings' provisions governed by Islam and based on justice, equality and no-harm. Allah Almighty said: (Do not wish for that by which Allah has made some of you exceed others. For men is a share of what they have earned, and for women is a share of what they have earned. And ask Allah for his bounty. Indeed, Allah is ever, of all things, Knowing) (An-Nissaa: 32). Muslim women preceded all other women worldwide when they held the accounting (hisba) office in markets and sales at Al Madinah Al Monawarah markets at the early years of Islam.

11. Security and protection: Islam has affirmed full protection of women, to be properly positioned and to serve as a basis for family constitution, enactment of laws, provisions and ethics to protect women as mothers, daughters, wives, sisters, aunts and grandmothers. Islam considers that women's security is only established through family preservation; they are the only system that Islam considers as a foundation of the individual, community and human stability in general; therefore, Islam compelled husbands, fathers, brothers, grand-sons and relatives to protect their women relatives, and compelled them to some duties towards them, to safeguard social cohesion and social heartfelt ; that is the safety valve of women's and men's security alike. Islam also made sure women have the priority in the provision of services during crises and wars. It prohibited any attack, harm or abuse of their suffering in any form whatsoever.

12. Decent living: Islam granted women access to decent livelihood, by affirming their right to work if they elect to work, or the right to mandatory

alimony if they elect not to go to work; as Allah Almighty compelled fathers, husbands and sons to bear the expenses of households, wives, mothers, sisters and relevant women that they inherit. Allah Almighty said: (Upon the father falls the responsibility of the mothers' provision and clothing according to what is acceptable) (Al-Baqara: 233). Addressing the global alimony of women that men inherit, and in the same verse, (And upon the heir is a duty like that). Moreover, Islam has secured women's right to dowry; Allah Almighty said: (And give the women (upon marriage) their (bridal) gifts graciously) (An-Nissaa: 4). It also secured women the right to inheritance, as daughters, wives or grand-daughters; Allah Almighty said: (For men is a share of what the parents and close relatives leave, and for women is a share of what the parents and close relatives leave, be it little or much, an obligatory share) (An-Nissaa: 7]. In order to ensure women can lead a decent life after the death of their foster parent, for example fathers, husbands or brothers. Islam gave widows and elderly women a right to public treasury. Some charges were dropped for women, as a relief and mitigation.

13. Enjoyment of life: Islam affirmed women's right to enjoy life with all the pleasures in this worldly life, just like men, according to the noble limits of Sharia; such the liberty to exercise and to enjoy sports, engagement in arts and literature and contribution thereto, enjoyment of the opportunities and potentials offered by such activities.

Based on the rights granted by Islam to women, herein above mentioned, we make the following recommendations:

- Seek to raise awareness and educate the community women's rights established by the Sharia and their responsibility to contribute to the efforts of development, construction and intellectual, scientific, cultural, social, economic and political rise, by empowering their holistic and disciplined engagement in all areas of life.
- Ensure women obtain a fully-fledged right to education, both religious and secular, at all levels and types, without discrimination or preference, yet based on equality and parity with their male brothers, provided that the targeted education includes scientific, professional, industrial and technical education. Businesses shall be encouraged to provide learning opportunities for female adults who missed the learning opportunity at their young age, by teaching them skills and knowledge required to improve their skills and increase their chances to get job opportunities, achieve success, professional development and planning, etc. in addition to working on combating women's literacy in rural and remote areas and for those living beneath the poverty line.
- Seek to provide holistic protection for women from stagnant and imported

practices exposing women to injustice, humiliation, vulgarity and violation of their right to preserve their faith, honor, funds, among other things; that is a right established by Islam for women and approved by the international principles of human rights.

- Strengthen the women's engagement and their presence in the decision-making process in all fields and at all levels: in the community, in the government, in businesses or organizations, by providing them with appropriate opportunities to take part to the various decision-making commissions and councils and empower them to contribute to the development of policies, programs and initiatives for the sake of the community.

- Promote enactment of legislations and laws that compel the various sectors to lasting women's empowerment to contribute to the efforts of construction, rise and advancement at all levels, ensuring their equal contribution to the development, construction, urbanization, progress and rise efforts. Ensure women's right to enjoy their freedom, practice their rights, liberate from social constraints in conflict with the teachings of Islam.

- Enact laws and deterrent measures that are capable of combating the forms of violence that are still practiced in some communities, though such habits are illegitimate as they involve battering and harm to women's health, namely on top of such wrongful practices are women genital mutilation, forced marriage and child marriage.

- Encourage set up of effective mechanism, procedures and measures to protect women from discrimination and violence, by providing them with urgent services and needed protection for battered and discriminated against women; create a safe and reassuring environment and ensure female victims of discrimination and violence are motivated to file complaints at the concerned authorities, in addition to providing specialized institutional networks that include programs to provide the essential holistic protection of battered women. Foster scientific, legitimate and legal research in the field of combating violence against women.

- Foster constructive positive public dialogue seeking to underline women's status, demonstrate their rights and duties in Islam, by means of symposiums, studies and conferences through the specialized scientific and legitimate centers, the intellectual commissions and institutions in OIC Member States. Foster statistical studies that help identify the large gap between men and women with regards some legitimate common rights and obligations, such as education, health and employment, particularly in rural areas where the female literacy rate is awfully high and alarming.

- Urge set up of the necessary guarantee measures to strengthen the pillars

of the family unit and its role in harnessing mutual respect among men and women, brothers and sisters, boys and girls, and promote the culture of non-discrimination, justice and equality in the family; promote the integration of women's status in Islam in the school curricula and programs for all educational stages, showing the provisions and rights approved by Islam for women.

- The need to coordinate and collaborate with the OIC and Member States, as well as the relevant bodies and institutions to follow-up and implement the OIC Plan of action for the advancement of women and ensure women's engagement to development and decision-making, which gave room to pursue the target for achieving rise, development and social justice provided for by Islam for women, and its road map in various fields, such as combating violence against women.

- Convene yearly and periodical conferences and symposiums to follow-up on the efforts exerted in the framework of the Muslim States' response to the initiatives and resolutions made by the OIC conferences, namely the resolutions and recommendations made by the bodies and institutions thereof, such as the resolutions and recommendations of the Organization of Women Development, the International Islamic Fiqh Academy and the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) with regards women's status and rights in Islam.

- Urge the media to raise the awareness on women's status and rights approved by Islam; and refrain from broadcasting programs that undermine women's dignity and status in commercials and advertising, which is a degradation of her personality, a humiliation of her dignity and a violation of her right to respect and veneration.

- Seek to create a conducive environment that foster equality of work opportunities and equal employment in all available fields of life, on the same footing as her male brother, by combating all methods and forms of exclusion based on gender and favoritism; criminalize the biased social norms based on gender; encourage women to pursue knowledge, work, share knowledge, training, provide access to health care, financial services and legal assistance; empowering women to access economic assets in order to achieve their well-being, independence and freedom of action. In order to ensure the women's equal and inclusive participation in the efforts towards rise, development and advancement; leveraging their potential, their mental, scientific, intellectual, educational and cultural capacity.

- Call upon the OIC Member States to adopt the laws on effective women's participation in managing public affairs of their country, in the community development and eliminating all obstacles hindering their capacity to do so

(Member States and women's participation and leveraging the community services

- **Encourage the establishment of civil institutions for women in Muslim communities, seeking to enlighten and educate women, to introduce them to their role in the community, to enhance their intellectual, cultural and creative level, to achieve self-development and increase their productivity and contribution, and to attain well-being and general development in the community.**
- **Exert efforts at all levels with view of alleviating the pains that women are still enduring, especially female vulnerable groups, providing the needed care for those who are still victims of armed conflicts, poverty, living among refugees and displaced people, victims of economic pressures; adopt quality programs that would have a positive impact on women's protection, as required by humanitarian and moral obligation.**
- **Provide care services to women with special needs, elderly women, and ensure non-abuse of rural female workers.**
- **Multiply the efforts and procedures seeking to clarify the position on development issues and the role of women; show the Islamic alternatives for some resolutions made by the United Nations conferences on population, development, women and children, that are inconsistent with the values, teachings and principles of Islam; intensify the efforts seeking to consolidate the position of the OIC Member States on the attempts to normalize homosexuality and to diminish sexual differences between men and women, or distort the true role of women.**
- **Take the appropriate measures for women's engagement in the international community and to represent their country in international forums; foster their participation in various fields: sport, political, cultural, economic, legal, tourist and other fields, according to equal opportunities for men and women.**
- **Join hands to support widows and divorced women by providing them with the required assistance and provide them with psychological, legal and social counseling, in addition to providing the basic needs, in terms of housing, development and finance solutions to help them live in dignity. Note also the importance of seeking to promote their production capacity, by qualifying them on labor market skills, with a view of attaining family, psychological and social stability.**
- **Take all measures, procedures and protective mechanisms to protect women under armed conflicts, cases of post-conflict, displacement or forced migration; ensure women receive humanitarian aid; have access to safe areas; streamline their access to shelter, food, education, health care and other essential needs.**

- Reaffirm women's role as a key component in social and economic development, peace and security building and prosperity in Member States, noting that respecting their rights and securing their access to all educational levels, including undergraduate, is a considerable pillar in the reconstruction pathway of their countries, and noting that securing all other human rights, such as life, security and dignity, and availing of medical facilities, job opportunities and engaging them in social development is a fundamental right that would enable Member States achieve security and prosperity, and leverage women's potentials, in conformity with Islamic values and human rights global standards.
- Call upon the Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to follow-up on the implementation of the directions and principles stated herein, in coordination with the OIC relevant organs and institutions.
- Call upon the International Islamic Fiqh Academy, in coordination with the OIC General Secretariat, represented by the General administration for cultural, social and family affairs, with the ISESCO, the Women Development Organization and the Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission to collaborate towards submitting the expected scientific content of school curricula on reproductive health and gender issues that are in conformity with the Islamic values and provisions, and request the Ministries of Education in the OIC Member States to include them in the school and undergraduate curricula.
- Call upon the OIC Member States and relevant bodies and institutions, in the framework of their respective mandate and powers, and in coordination with the General Secretariat, to implement the OIC Action Plan for the Advancement of Women in the economic, social, cultural, political areas and in peace and security building, especially in aspects related to presenting a true image of women in the Muslim world.
- Call upon the Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to pursue his consultations with the Member States in order to accelerate the launch of the "Covenant on Women's Rights in Islam" for discussion and subsequent adoption.



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