



## **The 65<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly – Third Committee - Agenda Item 28: “Advancement Of Women”**

Statement by

### **The General Secretariat of the Organization of the Islamic Conference**

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Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, my delegation thanks the Secretary General for his reports submitted under the agenda item on advancement of women, and welcomes the appointment of Ms. Michelle Bachelet as the first Under Secretary General for the UN-Women. We believe that the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women under her leadership will accelerate progress in meeting the needs of women and girls worldwide. In this regard, she will always be able to rely on the support of the Organization of the Islamic Conference General Secretariat.

Mr. Chairman,

The Organization of the Islamic Conference General Secretariat has long been actively engaged in the field of women development, and is making progress in terms of the empowerment of women across the Member States. According to the UN statistics, some of the OIC member states are among those who made the most progress toward attaining the MDGs related to women development.

The 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Sessions of the OIC Summit Conference (ISC) and the subsequent Sessions of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers (CFMs) reiterated their call to the Member States to take adequate steps to organize the activities of women at national and international levels and in all fields. These conferences also entrusted the General Secretariat to coordinate with the governments of the Member States in order to support direct and ongoing relations between Muslim women's associations in the Member States.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Extraordinary Summit of the OIC held in December 2005 called for greater efforts to be devoted to women's education and to eliminating illiteracy among women. It further called for the creation of a department dedicated to family affairs within the framework of efforts to restructure the OIC.

The OIC Ten Year Program of Action (TYPOA) adopted by this Summit has become the blue print of the OIC reform to tackle the challenges of the twenty first century. In line with the vision of this TYPOA, women were appointed to various departments of the OIC General Secretariat.

The 1<sup>st</sup> OIC Ministerial Conference on the Women's Role in the Development of OIC Member States was hosted by Turkey on 20-21 November 2006. This Conference provided an excellent opportunity for coordination among Member States in order to find out ways and means to prepare strategies, standards, programs and goals to advance the status of women.

The Conference addressed the following issues:

1. Introducing national policies and strategies for increasing women's empowerment and employment.
2. Ensuring women's participation in decision-making and political process at all levels, eradicating poverty among women, and providing equal access to education in all its forms.
3. Ensuring better future for women through education, and elimination of gender inequality.
4. Eliminating all forms of violence against women through various measures including education, legislation, awareness-raising activities, that address inter-alia prevention, protection and prosecution.

Consequently, the Conference recommended the following:

1. A governmental group of experts be established within the OIC framework to formulate the strategies and set goals on the advancement of women.
2. The women conference be convened at the ministerial level every two years.
3. Subject-specific symposia be staged within the OIC framework to discuss the issues related to women.

Mr. Chairman

Following the directives of the 1<sup>st</sup> Ministerial Conference, the OIC Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women (OPAAW) was developed and adopted by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ministerial Conference on the Role of Women in the Development of the OIC Member States. The Conference was held in Cairo, which led the Plan to be also known as "the Cairo Plan of Action for Women".

This Plan of Action (OPAAW) addresses the issues and challenges experienced by women in the OIC Member States, particularly by creating opportunities and promoting their equal access to labor markets, sustainable employment and adequate social security. The Plan also aims eliminating gender inequalities and all forms of discrimination in education as well as violence against women and girls, and finally promoting increased participation of women in the decision-making bodies and political process at all levels. The OIC General Secretariat emphasizes the need for appropriate legislations in the Member States in order to ensure implementation of these goals in advancing women's situation.

Finally, the OIC finalized the procedure for establishing the Organization of Women Development in the OIC Member States and adopted its statute at the 37<sup>th</sup> CFM held in Dushanbe, Tajikistan in 2009. This Organization will be based in Cairo, Egypt.

Once again, my delegation reiterates its genuine desire and hope that advancement of women is carried out consistently and properly, and that gender equality becomes a universally accepted norm in both Muslim and non-Muslim countries. The OIC General Secretariat is looking forward to working closely with the UN-Women in fulfilling this hope.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.