

OIC/3-WCOD/2010/REP-RECOM/FINAL

**Report and Recommendations
of the Third Ministerial Conference
on the Role of Women in the Development of the
OIC Member States
(Women, Family, Economy)
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
13-15 Muharram 1432 H
(19-21 December, 2010)**

REPORT

1. In the framework of OIC implementation of the Ten-year programme of Action, adopted by the Third Extraordinary Islamic Summit Conference, held in Makkah Al Mukarramah in 2005, and in conformity with the resolutions of the First and Second Ministerial Conferences on the Role of Women in the Development of the OIC Member States, in 2006 and 2008, respectively in Istanbul, Republic of Turkey, and Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt; and in the context of implementing Resolution No. 3/32-C on “Muslim Woman and Her Role in the Development of Islamic Society” adopted by the 32nd Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, held in Sanaa, Republic of Yemen, which called for organizing a Ministerial-level conference aimed at “generating more opportunities, for women in every walk of social life and to draft a plan of action to enhance the role of women in the development of Muslim societies”, the Third Ministerial Conference on the Role of Women in the Development of the OIC Member States was held in Tehran, on 19-21 December 2010, in response to a kind invitation extended by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran.
2. Delegations representing 41 OIC Member States participated in the conference as well as representatives from the OIC General Secretariat, the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), and the International Islamic Fiqh Academy.
3. The conference proceedings began with recitation from the Glorious Qur'an. This was followed by the statement of the Chair of the second conference presented by Mrs Farkhanda Hasan, Head of the delegation of the Arab Republic of Egypt.
4. Following that Mrs Maryam Mojtahedzadeh, Adviser to the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, President of the Woman and Family Centre and Head of Delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran assumed chairmanship of the conference after her election to the position. She delivered a statement in which she welcomed the participants to the Islamic Republic of Iran.

She said that the OIC is committed to improving the situation of women in a multitude of ways. Working within the framework of the OIC, she added, provides various opportunities to Member States. It also respects cultural diversity and special national circumstances. These states will benefit from the possibility of exchanging experiences, expertise, as well as national and international programmes by relying on Islamic law concerning the honour and status of women. She also said that the Organization coordinates among its members.

Mrs. Mojtahedzadeh referred to the two previous conferences held in Turkey and Egypt in which Iran participated at the high level. She expressed her gratitude and

added that the Islamic Republic of Iran held the first international meeting of women intellectuals in the Muslim world in 2010, in association with ISESCO. During this conference, Mrs. Mojtahedzadeh said Iran began a project to establish and international network of women intellectuals in the Muslim world and continues to follow its activities. The advisor to the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran for Women and Family Affairs added that there is no doubt that every successful change requires a review, benefiting from previous experiences with a view to making progress for the future. In view of that there is a need to study the structure of contemporary theories on women issues in the Muslim world.

In concluding her speech Mrs. Maryam Mojtahedzadeh said that Muslim women are capable of reviving true knowledge, claiming rights and accepting responsibilities. We provide a complete and honourable model of a balanced woman who preserves her pride and dignity in the Muslim world. We can assess the role of women as a mother and revive the family system as well as benefit from the influential presence of women in the advancement and development of OIC Member States.

5. The Chairperson gave the floor to H.E. Ambassador Samir Bakr Diyab, Assistant Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and Representative of His Excellency the OIC Secretary General, who expressed the regrets of the Secretary General Professor Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu for not being physically present at the conference due to health reasons. Ambassador Diyab read the statement of the Secretary General to the conference. The statement started with an expression of the Secretary General's gratitude and appreciation to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran for hosting the conference. He also expressed sincere gratitude to H.E. President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad for his unflinching support for the OIC and for his high patronage of the conference. He also thanked the Arab Republic of Egypt, Chair of the previous session for the efforts it exerted during its chairmanship of the conference.

He explained that women comprise almost half of the Ummah's population and therefore the cause for their advancement is beyond question, adding that they also play the crucial role in the proper functioning of the very fundamental institution of the society: the family.

He pointed out that "Women have usually been victims of prejudice and misperceptions, traditions, customs, and the negative mindset dominant in our societies, whereas Islam upholds the rights and status of women in the society and strongly supports their participation and involvement in various fields of life."

The Secretary General explained that many sessions of the Islamic Summit Conference and the Council of Foreign Ministers have underscored the necessity of addressing the needs and concerns of Muslim women and their role in the development of Islamic society.

He said that the OIC as part of its new strategy laid out in the Ten Year Programme of Action focused on some key areas related to the development and empowerment of women.

Professor Ihsanoglu recalled the first conference held in Istanbul and the second one held in Cairo. The latter adopted the OIC Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women, and approved the establishment of a Women Organization to be based in Cairo. The Council of Foreign Ministers held in Tajikistan in 2010 approved the Statute of the Organization. The Secretary General urged Member States to sign and ratify the statute so that it can come into force and the Organization can commence its work at an early date. He also highlighted a very important development in the OIC which is the prospective establishment of an OIC Independent Permanent Commission on Human Rights (IPCHR) as an OIC organ under the new Charter.

In conclusion, the Secretary General expressed his confidence that the Third Ministerial Conference will be another milestone in the cause of the advancement of Muslim women, and that the decisions of the meeting will contribute immensely to bring women out of backwardness and put them in the fast track of their advancement.

6. His Excellency Dr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad President of the Islamic Republic of Iran delivered the opening speech of the conference. The President considered women's salvation at the world's salvation. He also emphasized the importance of consultation and inter-action of women in order to prepare the charter of women and family's role to save today's humanity and to take advantage of their capabilities and potentialities to effect all the plans of this charter.

Dr. Ahmadinejad stressed that a plan should be designed to help global movement program and revive human rights, especially women's rights. "Providing this plan is required way of communication and consultation with intellectuals and elites of different countries so that its mechanism could be developed," Ahmadinejad said.

Moreover, the President noted that women's prominent models especially 5 grade women of the world in particular Hazrat Fatima and Zainab (S.A) should be introduced to all women by using media tools so as to increase self confidence and hope of success for women.

Dr. Ahmadinejad considered the topic of the 3rd Conference "Women, Family and Economy" as important elements of the society's prosperity and went on to say: "economy should be serving society and family and not the other way round."

He also said that the woman is the key element of family information and high role should be defined in three categories: offering kindness, providing consolation and managing and training.

The President added: “family has always been a fundamental component of the society, and the prosperity and development of the societies are dependent on the prosperity of the family. A cohesive and compassionate family is the main point of the society movement towards perfection. Therefore managing family is one of the most complicated management fields, and the best men were educated by the great women.”

Dr. Ahmadinejad explained: “In Karbala, Zainab played a role to defend the monotheism school and the Prophet’s family, managing movement of the captives’ caravans. The monotheism school is eternally indebted to her.”

He pointed to financial vision about women and noted that the oppressors and arrogant pursue their objectives with violence. In the recent decade they have tried to humiliate women and impede their progress and advancement. They have also debased families to destroy the role of women as the provider of love and compassion.

The President said that woman-oriented financial philosophy, vision and thought are indications of humaneness in financial dimension. Ahmadinejad pointed out that women have suffered the most from the policies of the oppressors: “Women have suffered a lot throughout wars and conflicts in the world, and pains and economic afflictions from the profits seeking actions of global capitalists have targeted women.”

Dr. Ahmadnejad added: “Women from Muslim countries are equipped with a strong intellectual infrastructure based on divine thought. Moreover, Muslim women are blessed to have influential and outstanding Muslim women role models set as Hazrat Khadija and Fatima (SA).”

7. The Conference Bureau was composed as follows:

- Islamic Republic of Iran - Chairman
 - Republic of Iraq
 - Republic of Mali
 - State of Palestine
- } Vice- Chairmen
- Arab Republic of Egypt Rapporteur

8. The Conference adopted its programme of work and agenda which included:

- a- Vision for Women, Family and Economy in the OIC Member States.

- b- Status of the Implementation of the OIC Action Plan for the Advancement of Women.
 - c- Comprehensive study on the situation of Women in OIC Member States.
 - d- Mechanism for the follow up of the “Cairo Plan of Action for Women”
 - e- Discussion and adoption of conference report and recommendations.
9. The conference witnessed intensive discussions on women issues and the challenges they are facing in OIC Member States, particularly as regards the issue of Women, Family and Economy. The aim is to enable women to participate in economic activity parallel to performing their basic role in the family. The conference stressed the necessity of providing equal opportunities for women in the work market and facilitating her access to the means, including financial means in terms of credits and micro-credits so as to facilitate doing jobs that enable them to gain income for the family.
10. The participants considered poverty as a substantial obstacle to the empowerment of women and stressed the necessity of alleviating poverty. They called for addressing the issue of the marginalization of women which stems from conditions of poverty. The participants urged the Member States to prepare programs for the alleviation of poverty including micro-finance in order to achieve economic liberty for Women.
11. The conference urged for the effective participation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other institutions of civil society to prepare programs that aim at integrating women in the economic cycle and called for increasing awareness among men and women of the rights of women, including the right to enjoy the fruits of development.
12. The conference highlighted the importance of ratifying the necessary laws and relevant international agreements by parliaments of the OIC Member States, in order to lessen the economic and social deprivation of women and improve their material and moral status and ensure their protection from all forms of violence, including domestic violence.
13. The conference discussed the status of implementing the Cairo Plan of Action for the advancement of women. Representatives of Member States reviewed their contributions towards the implementations of this plan on increasing awareness of the issue of empowering and developing women. The need for drawing up national strategies for this status became apparent.
14. The conference welcomed the mechanism proposed by the General Secretariat to implement the Cairo Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women and reiterated the need to draw up indicators for evaluation and follow up concerning the implementation of this plan.

15. The conference requested to consider the establishment of a forum for the creation of a network among the OIC Member States in accordance with recommendation No. 7 in the OIC Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women.
16. The participants considered drawing up mechanisms for decision making at the local and national level , and reconfirmed the need for finding opportunities for equal participation of women in the decision making process within the family and in the work place, as well as at the level of national policies.
17. The conference confirmed that combating violence against women constitutes a priority considering that violence constitutes a violation of Human Rights and the Basic Rights of women. It considered violence as an impediment to the advancement of women.
18. The conference stressed the need for the propagation of Islamic teachings that oppose violence against women. It urges the Member States to educate both men and women about the rights and the proper status of women in society. It also urged the Member States to intensify their efforts in combating female circumcision. The conference invited the OIC Member States to exchange expertise and programs on preventing violence against women and children and urged them to support the processes of rehabilitation and re-integration of women and children who are the victims of violence. The conference requested the member States to exert intensive efforts to organize awareness campaigns to promote positive social change for the benefit of children and women, victims of violence. It called for the establishment of national centers for data and information about violence against women and children for the sake of effective intervention at the right time.
19. The conference condemned continuation of the blockade imposed by Israel on Gaza Strip and exhorted the international community to urgently act to lift the blockade which is imperiling our Palestinian brothers and sisters, especially women and children who fall within the human danger zone. The conference stressed that the blockade imposed on Gaza, which constitutes a flagrant violation of the International Humanitarian Law, is considered the most pernicious form of violence against women and humanity in general.
20. The conference welcomed the adoption by the 37th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers, held in Dushanbe, Republic of Tajikistan, of the Statute to establish the Organization of Women Development in the OIC Member States, pursuant to a proposal submitted by the Arab Republic of Egypt on creating a new organization for women affairs affiliated to the OIC and to have its headquarters in Cairo. It called for acceleration of the signing and ratification of the said statute which will enable the women organization to engage in action after attaining quorum very soon.

21. The conference welcomed the establishment of a department of Family Affairs in the OIC General Secretariat and recommended that the Department should participate in the implementation and follow up of the Cairo Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women.
22. The conference welcomed the offers made by the delegations of a number of Member States to hold meetings and conferences on issues relevant to the advancement of women in the OIC countries.
23. The conference commended the OIC Secretary General for paying special attention to the issues of women in the OIC Member States. It expressed its thanks to the OIC General Secretariat for the efforts it has exerted and the contributions it has made which helped to succeed in holding the conference.
24. The conference welcomed proposals from the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Republic of Indonesia, the Republic of Azerbaijan, and the State of Kuwait to host the Fourth Ministerial Conference on the Role of Women in the Development of the OIC Member States, scheduled to be held in 2012. In view of the four candidatures, the General Secretariat would facilitate consultations in order to reach a consensus in this regard.
25. The conference endorsed the Tehran Declaration attached to this report.
26. The conference expressed its profound thanks and appreciation to His Excellency President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad for his lofty patronizing of the conference, as well as to the government and people of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the distinguished preparations made for the conference and for offering all the necessary facilities throughout the duration of the meetings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The mechanism attached to this report which was adopted by the conference is the set of recommendations for this conference.
