



**REPUBLIC OF TURKEY  
MINISTRY OF FAMILY, LABOUR AND  
SOCIAL SERVICES**

**OIC/IMCSD/2019/DEC**

**ISTANBUL DECLARATION**

**MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

**THEME: “ENSURING SOCIAL EQUALITY AND WELFARE FOR ALL IN THE  
MEMBER STATES: THE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES”**

**ISTANBUL, REPUBLIC OF TURKEY**

**9 DECEMBER 2019**

## ISTANBUL DECLARATION

We, the Ministers and representatives of the OIC Member States participating in the First Session of the OIC Ministerial Conference on Social Development held in Istanbul, Republic of Turkey, on 9 December 2019, under the theme of “Ensuring Social Equality and Welfare for All in the Member States: The Opportunities and Challenges”;

***Determined*** to improve brotherly relations and enhance unity and solidarity among the Member States of the OIC in all fields and at all levels;

***Reaffirming*** our commitment to promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the preservation of Islamic family values, the rights of children, the elderly people and people with special needs, and to preserving and promoting the role of the family as the natural and fundamental bedrock of society;

***Guided by*** the Final Communiqués adopted by the Islamic Summit in its 13th Session (14-15 April 2016, Istanbul) and 14<sup>th</sup> Session (31 May 2019, Mecca) as well as the Resolution No. 4/46-CUL adopted at the 46<sup>th</sup> Session of Council of Foreign Ministers (1-2 March 2019, Abu Dhabi);

***Recalling*** the outcomes of the First Session of the Ministerial Conference on Strengthening Marriage and Family Institution and Preserving its Values in Member States of the OIC held on 8-9 February 2017 in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Fifth Islamic Conference of Ministers in charge of Childhood, held in Rabat on 21-22 February 2018;

***Inspired by*** the OIC 2025 Programme of Action, which, under the priority area on Advancement and Empowerment of Women, Family Welfare, and Social Security, encourages policies for promotion of family and development of effective and reliable social services for family, children, elderly, and people with special needs;

***Taking note of*** the Resolution (A/HRC/26/11) of the UN Human Rights Council on the “Protection of the Family”, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which has been ratified by all Member States, Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities;

***Acknowledging*** the role of family as the natural, elementary and fundamental social unit in Muslim societies and role of family policies in improving education, awareness-raising, and human capacity for the achievement of 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and ***highlighting*** the key role of the elderly in the transfer of cultural traditions and values, and the socialization and care of younger members of family;

***Noting with concern*** the current challenges and trends affecting the marriage and family institutions in the OIC countries, as well as the reports indicating that there are around 60 million out-of-school children of primary school age and the children are facing complex challenges and obstacles in countries affected from civil wars, armed conflict and/or general instability;

**Commending** the efforts of Member States, General Secretariat and the relevant OIC Institutions in the field of family, children, the protection of the elderly and people with special needs and **desirous of** further strengthening the cooperation among the Member States in these fields, including through policy coordination, best practices and experience sharing and capacity-building;

1. **Encourage** active cooperation and dialogue between the Member States, OIC organs, civil society and private sector to further cooperate and coordinate their policies, and develop and implement programs, in order to strengthen and support family, child welfare, the well-being and social security for the elderly and persons with disabilities and ensure their active participation to their respective societies;
2. **Welcome** the initiative of the Chair of the Conference, Republic of Turkey, in coordination with the General Secretariat and relevant OIC organs, to initiate a dialogue among all relevant stakeholders towards development of a general framework for cooperation and coordination in these fields, which will enable, among others, experience sharing through workshops, training programmes and study visits and conduct of researches and studies in order to determine current challenges and propose solutions;
3. **Recognize** the key role of the non-governmental organizations in responding to social challenges, formulating appropriate interventions and providing services to the vulnerable social groups, thus supplementing the public efforts and **call upon** the Member States to promote coordination and joint action with the non-governmental organizations, active in the field of family, children, the protection of the elderly and people with disabilities and special needs;
4. **Support** the Member States towards introducing legal, administrative and social measures to eliminate all existing legal, physical, sociological and traditional barriers and prejudices, and preventing neglect, self-neglect, abuse, vulnerability, and violence against elderly people and people with special needs in all walks of life;
5. **Acknowledge** that employment and skills strategies are essential to ensure the social inclusion and active contribution and participation of the elderly and the people with special needs to their societies and **recommend** the Member States to consider introduction of positive discrimination policies for these groups
6. **Emphasize** the introduction of appropriate social protection systems in addressing the well-being and social protection of the children, elderly and people with special needs and **request** the General Secretariat, in cooperation with ISESCO and SESRIC, to conduct a study on various kinds of social protection and safety net programmes in Member States with the objective of encouraging the sharing of best practices;
7. **Encourage** Member States to take more effective measures to prevent economic, social and psychological harm to children, particularly in conflict areas and **stress** in this context their protection from contemporary challenges and risks such as screen addiction, drug addiction, online child abuse, peer violence, cyber bullying, and digital harassment;

8. **Appreciate** Republic of Turkey for hosting millions of refugees and supporting them by providing special assistance, and **call on** the Member States to further cooperate and coordinate their policies to support and rehabilitate the refugee families and particularly their children, enhance cooperation and coordination with regional and international partners, particularly the UN agencies, develop social adaptation programs for refugee children, and training programs for their parents, **support** the Member States to establish National Family Social Support Centres in order to provide essential social, educational and psychological services to refugee families in the Member States;
9. **Request** relevant OIC institutions and funds, in particular the Islamic Development Bank, to develop projects and support the efforts of the host Member States, to provide adequate and accessible services, including health, education, entrepreneurship, vocational training and employment opportunities to families, children, the elderly and people with special needs;
10. **Invite** the Member States and the relevant OIC organs to enhance their efforts to raise the public awareness in accordance with Islamic values in the sphere of family empowerment, child welfare, the protection of the elderly and persons with special needs, including by production and dissemination of information materials through press and social media;
11. **Request** SESRIC to prioritise in its activities data collection and dissemination in these domains and establish, in cooperation with other relevant OIC organs, an OIC-wide research and follow-up program, which would guide the development of effective socio-economic policies towards these groups;
12. **Welcome** the “OIC Strategy for the Empowerment of the Family and Marriage Institution” and OIC Strategy on the Welfare of the elderly, and **agree** to take appropriate steps to implement these Strategies;
13. **Extend our deepest gratitude** to H.E. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of the Republic of Turkey for honouring the Conference with his presence, **profoundly appreciate** the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services, for the generous hospitality accorded to the participants and **highly commends** the OIC General Secretariat for its cooperation and support for the organization of the First Session of the OIC Ministerial Conference on Social Development.

*Istanbul, 09 December 2019*