



REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
MINISTRY OF FAMILY, LABOUR
AND SOCIAL SERVICES

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FINAL REPORT

**FIRST MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
IN THE OIC MEMBER STATES**

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

ISTANBUL – REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

9 DECEMBER 2019

1. The First Ministerial Conference on Social Development in the OIC Member States took place in Istanbul, on 7-9 December 2019, at the kind invitation of the government of the Republic of Turkey.
2. Delegations representing forty-six (46) OIC Member States participated in the conference. There were also participants representing the OIC General Secretariat, subsidiary organs, specialized and affiliated institutions, and representatives of relevant UN agencies, regional and international organizations.

Opening Session:

3. The conference opened with recitation of verses from the Glorious Qur'an, followed by a statement on behalf of the OIC Secretary General, delivered by Assistant Secretary General for Humanitarian, Cultural and Social Affairs Ambassador Tareq Ali Bakheet. The Assistant Secretary General expressed his gratitude to the government and people of Turkey for so generously hosting the conference and for the warm welcome extended to the participating delegations. He also congratulated Turkey for the choice of the conference theme. He observed that the session was the first following the adoption by the 46th Council of Foreign Ministers (Abu Dhabi, 1-2 March 2019) of the resolution to convene meetings of ministers of social affairs to consider issues relating to empowerment of the marriage and family institution, child welfare, social security for the aged, people with special needs and other social issues in the Muslim world.
4. The Assistant Secretary General also stated that the 14th Islamic Summit held in Makkah al Mukarramah on 31 May 2019 underlined that the social dimension is fundamental to the realization of sustainable development and that investment in social protection is a means for achieving the sought objectives. He emphasized that the challenges which the Member States face in the area of social development require greater cooperation between them and the institutions working in that field. He added that the General Secretariat, in coordination with the Member States, has developed several strategies and action plans, in implementation of the resolutions of the Council of Foreign Ministers. Discussed by the Senior Officials' Meeting, these documents are submitted to the Conference for adoption.
5. Speakers included Dr Salim Al-Malik, Director General of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO). He delivered a statement in which he welcomed the convening of the Ministerial Conference on Social Development, which he said coincided with the 30th anniversary of the signing of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the 50th anniversary of the OIC. He noted that ISESCO had prepared the guiding framework for child welfare strategy in the Muslim world which the Council of Foreign Ministers' 46th session (Abu Dhabi, 1-2 March 2019) asked to be prepared. He also extended ISESCO's gratitude to the Republic of Turkey for the arrangements it has taken to ensure the success of the conference. He reviewed some of the activities undertaken by ISESCO to implement the resolutions adopted by ministerial conferences for social development.
6. Speaking at the conference, H.E. Dr Lalla Malika Issoufou, First Lady of the Republic of Niger, delivered a statement in which she reviewed the activities of the *Tatali Iyali Foundation*, which she chairs. The Foundation works on child welfare, family empowerment, fight against underage marriage, fight against cancer, particularly among women, welfare and social security for the aged and persons with special needs. She also

reviewed the efforts being made by the government of Niger on the issue, pointing out that increasing opportunities for accessing treatment is the Government of Niger's main objective. She announced that the government is currently working to develop a new strategic plan to establish new diagnostic units in all the Nigerien provinces, in the effort to combat cancer and to ensure early diagnosis, such being key to success in this regard. She welcomed the convening of the ministerial conference on social development, as it would be an opportunity to discuss ways of enhancing cooperation among member states in the area of social development.

7. The Minister of Family, Labour and Social Services of the Republic of Turkey, H.E. Mrs. Zehra Zümür Selçuk, made an opening remark to the conference in her capacity as chair of the First Ministerial Conference on Social Development. H.E. the Minister welcomed the participating delegations and thanked them for their participation in the Conference. H.E. the Minister expressed Turkey's appreciation for the confidence reposed in it by the Member States with their acceptance of its offer to host this session. H.E. the Minister added that the presence of so many delegations was an indication of the importance, which the OIC Member States attach to the issue of social development.
8. H.E. the Minister also stated that Turkey's hosting of the conference reflected the will of the Turkish authorities to put the issue of social development at the core of its policies. H.E. the Minister stated that the conference would provide an opportunity for the OIC Member States and the participating delegations to exchange views on the issue of ensuring social equality and welfare for all in the Member States, and to consider the opportunities and challenges, identify the obstacles and propose solutions to address them. H.E. the Minister also thanked the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, chair of the First Ministerial Conference on the Marriage and Family Institutions, for the achievements recorded during its tenure as chair.
9. H.E. Mr Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of the Republic of Turkey honored the Conference in the opening session with his presence and addressed the participants. In his statement, HE the President of the Republic of Turkey drew attention to the challenges facing the Islamic Ummah in the area of social development in general, and the issues of family empowerment, child welfare, protection and welfare of the aged, provision of services for the persons with special needs, issues of displaced persons and refugees resulting from armed conflicts and occupation. H.E. the President underlined the need to increase the efficiency of OIC, with all its institutions and activities, which is the sole instrument of Muslims to surmount these challenges. He underscored that transforming the OIC into an efficient and effective organization, which would properly perform its responsibilities for the prosperity, peace and security of all Muslims is a duty that falls on Member States. He also emphasized that the current level of economic, social and cultural development in Muslim states are disproportionate to their potential. In realizing this potential, he highlighted the role of the family institution, which is a hallmark of Muslim societies. He stated that contemporary challenges require a thorough review of current social policies and reminded that it would not be possible for any Member State to achieve its objectives while undermining the principle of social state.
10. His Excellency Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the President of the Republic of Turkey exhorted the participants to identify ways of overcoming the contemporary challenges, expressing Turkey's readiness, as the Chair of the First Ministerial Conference on Social

Development, to work towards enhancing the role of the OIC and fostering cooperation among Member States in the area of social development. H.E the President stated that Turkey, as the Chair of the Conference, would cooperate with the Member States, in the fields of capacity-building, experience-sharing, technical assistance and policy coordination in the next two years. He also emphasized the follow-up of the implementation of resolutions adopted in the Conference.

Election of the Conference Bureau:

11. The Conference endorsed the Bureau elected by the Senior Officials' Meeting as follows:

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| ➤ Republic of Turkey | Chair |
| ➤ Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the Arab Group | Vice Chair |
| ➤ Republic of Guinea for the African Group | Vice Chair |
| ➤ State of Palestine | Vice Chair |
| ➤ Republic of Tunisia | Rapporteur |

12. Following the election of the Bureau, H.E. Mrs Zehra Zümrüt Selçuk, Minister of Family, Labour and Social Services in the Republic of Turkey, assumed the Chair position to which she was elected, warmly welcoming all the participants.

13. The Conference adopted the agenda and work programme proposed by the Senior Officials' Meeting.

Deliberations:

14. The participating delegations reviewed member states' policies and efforts in the area of social development and highlighted the progress made on the implementation of the OIC's resolutions in child welfare, empowerment of the marriage and family institution, as well as welfare and social security for the aged and persons with special needs.
15. Speaking to the conference, the representative of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) reviewed the Commission's efforts on social development, and expressed readiness to cooperate with the OIC to ensure that the outcome of the conference is translated into action. The conference was also an opportunity for the representatives of such partner organizations as the AU and UNICEF to share experience in the field.
16. The meeting explored the current status of social development in Al-Quds Al-Sharif and the occupied Palestinian territories, calling on the Member States, the OIC institutions concerned and the international community to shore up the Palestinian authorities' efforts for development.
17. The representative of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) made a presentation in which she reviewed the efforts of ISESCO in the field of empowering the institution of marriage, family, child welfare, welfare and social security for the elderly and providing services for people with special needs in Member states.

18. Mr Nabil Dabur, Director General of the Statistical, Economic, Social Research and Training Center for Islamic Countries (SESRIC), delivered a statement highlighting the Centre's efforts in implementing resolutions on social development and women's empowerment in the Member States.
19. The other presentation was that of the Executive Director of the OIC Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC), Mr Marghoob Butt, on the Commission's efforts in empowering and preserving the values inherent to the family and marriage institution, protecting the rights of women, the child, the aged, special need people and persons with disabilities.
20. The OIC organs and institutions, both subsidiary and specialized, presented their efforts on empowerment of the marriage and family institution, child welfare, as well as welfare and social security of the aged and persons with special needs in the Member States.
21. The Conference called on the Member States that are yet to ratify the Statute of the Women Development Organization to expedite the signing and ratification of this Cairo-based specialized body on women's development, to activate its role on women advancement and follow up of the OIC Plan of Action for the Advancement of Woman (OPAAW).

Resolutions:

22. The Conference adopted the following resolutions:
 - a) Omnibus Resolution no. 1/1. I-S on Social Development in the OIC Member States.
 - b) Resolution no. 2/1. I-S on Encouraging National Social and Family Assistance Centers for Refugees.
23. The Conference adopted the following strategies:
 - a) OIC Strategy for the Empowerment of the Marriage and Family Institution (A guiding strategy)
 - b) OIC Strategy on the Welfare of the Elderly (A guiding strategy)
24. Concerning the Republic of Turkey's draft resolution on the establishment of the OIC Family Council, the Chair pointed out that the project has been in principle welcomed by the participant member states and in fact, such a mechanism was suggested in the OIC Strategy on Empowering Marriage and Family Institution, which was just adopted. Nevertheless, the conference asked the project to be referred for further consideration to the Council of Foreign Minister's upcoming session in Niger. H.E. the Minister stated that Turkey will submit a detailed draft Resolution to the 47th CFM, in light of the comments in the Conference.

Date and Venue for the Second Ministerial Conference on Social Development:

25. The conference decided to meet biennially, each time in one of the member states.
26. The General Secretariat notified the ministerial conference that it has received an official note from the Arab Republic of Egypt, indicating their willingness to host the Conference's second session. The General Secretariat informed that it has circulated the note to the member states.

27. During the ministerial conference, the State of Palestine, the State of Qatar, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Republic of Niger expressed each their willingness to play host to the Conference's second session.
28. The head of delegation of the Federal Republic of Nigeria underlined the Conference's importance, suggesting in this regard that it convenes annually. She indicated that, if the proposal is approved, Nigeria would be ready to host the Conference's third session.
29. The General Secretariat pointed out that, as per the Rules of Procedure for the Organization's meetings, sectoral ministerial meetings take place biennially. It also explained that the CFM's meetings, occurring regularly every year, allow it to follow up on the implementation of the resolutions of the sector-wise meetings and report thereon to the following CFM meeting.
30. The Egyptian delegation pointed out that Egypt has followed the official procedures in presenting its request to host the second session of the Conference through a Note to the General Secretariat, which was circulated to the Member States, and it was the only offer submitted to the Senior Officials Meeting.
31. The conference took note of the offer by the Arab Republic of Egypt to host the second session of the Ministerial Conference on Social Development in 2021.
32. The conference also took note of the offers by the State of Palestine, the State of Qatar, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Republic of Niger to host the Ministerial Conference on Social Development in 2021.
33. The Conference requested the Secretary General and the Chair to conduct consultations with the Member States that requested to host the second session and to submit their conclusion to the Council of Foreign Ministers.
34. For her part, the Chair of the conference, Mrs Zehra Zümrüt Selçuk, explained that when more than one state offers to host the conference's next session, this signals how keen the OIC member states are on social development, which she viewed as positive for the Organization. She reminded that it is the sovereign right of Member States to declare their nomination for the hosting of the next session and Ministerial Meeting is the session of the Conference where the decisions are taken.
35. The Conference adopted the Istanbul Declaration, prepared by the host country.

Closing Session:

36. In her concluding remarks, H.E. Mrs Zehra Zümrüt Selçuk, Minister of Family, Labour and Social Services expressed her appreciation and congratulations to all the participants for the achievements they recorded during the days of the conference. H.E. the Minister described it as a demonstration of their commitment to and concern for social development issues in the Member States. H.E. the Minister emphasized that the theme of the conference "Ensuring Social Equality and Welfare for all in the Member States: Opportunities and Challenges" has allowed the various parties to take an in-depth look into the matter, which is equally important in the development of OIC Member States. The Conference's Chair further observed that, by making the issue as the theme of the session, the OIC is reflecting

in concrete terms the dire need for investment in social protection as a cornerstone for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

37. H.E. the Minister also stated that the importance of the outcome confirms the urgent need for the Member States and institutions working in the field to take into account the issue of ensuring social equality and welfare for all in the Member States. H.E. the Minister called on development partners to increase support for countries requiring support to achieve common objectives. H.E. the Minister concluded her statement by declaring the conference closed.

Vote of Thanks

38. The Conference expressed its profound gratitude to H.E. President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan for his generous support to ensure the success of the conference. The Conference extended sincere thanks to H.E. Mrs Zehra Zümür Selçuk, Minister of Family, Labour and Social Services of the Republic of Turkey, for the excellent organization and for providing all the necessary facilities throughout its duration.
39. The Conference also expressed deep appreciation to the General Secretariat for its efforts and contribution to the success of its sittings.

Istanbul, 9 December 2019