



*OIC/WMC-8/2021/ DECLARATION*

**CAIRO DECLARATION**

**Eighth Session of the OIC Ministerial Conference on Women**

**“Preserving the Achievement of Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in  
Light of the COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond”**

**Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt  
26-28 Dhul-Aiida 1442H  
6-8 July 2021**

## CAIRO DECLARATION

*We, the Ministers in charge of women in the OIC Member States, participants to the 8<sup>th</sup> Session of the Ministerial Conference of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) on Women: “Preserving the Achievements of Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women in light of the COVID 19 Pandemic and Beyond”, held in Cairo, the Arab Republic of Egypt from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup> of July, 2021;*

**Acknowledging** that the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic is a powerful reminder of our interconnectedness and vulnerabilities, as the virus respects no borders, and that combating this pandemic calls for an open, transparent, robust, coordinated, large-scale, science-based and inclusive global response in the spirit of solidarity,

**Stressing** that the promotion of the role of women in society, and their active participation in decision making is a must to achieve sustainable development and peace in our countries and helps to improve different aspects of life, including elimination of poverty, realizing and respecting universally acknowledged human rights, and increasing societal resilience and capacity to address the challenges related to crisis including pandemics such as COVID-19;

**Recognizing** the important role of women within the family unit and society as a whole, and acknowledging in this regard that the protection of the family during the pandemic is a must;

**Recognizing** also that, the divine teachings and values of Islam ensure the promotion and protection of all the political, cultural and economic rights of women;

**Affirming** the commitments of the Member States to protect, promote, and respect the rights of women and girls as an indivisible part of human rights;

**Noting** that some women and girls in the OIC Member States are still confronted with inequality, exclusion, marginalization, violence in all its forms and socio-economic difficulties,

**Stressing** the important role of leaders and religious institutions in advancing the tolerant teachings and values of Islam especially those relevant to women’s rights;

**Expressing** grave concern over the global crisis triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic and its unprecedented negative health, economic and social impacts on the international community in general, and that the pandemic is exacerbating existing inequalities, and disproportionately affecting women and girls of all ages,

**Expressing concern** that women and girls continue to carry a disproportionate share of unpaid care, which needs to be addressed, and in this regard express further concern that, when taking care of infected family members, they are more likely to be exposed to COVID-19,

**Alerted** that all these impacts on women and girls are further amplified, especially in contexts of armed conflict, displacement, migration, the spread of epidemics, disasters, and other humanitarian emergencies, with a risk of reversing the progress that has been accomplished in the field of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls,

**Recognizing** the importance of international and regional cooperation, including among OIC member States, to increase the capacity of states to face existing and new challenges,

especially challenges with an international nature such as COVID 19 and other epidemics;

**Emphasizing** the urgent need for adopting initiatives, on a voluntary basis, that focus on facing threats emerging from pandemics and building an effective global response against outbreaks of deadly infectious diseases,

**Recognizing** that stereotyping, discrimination and violence against women and girls is a great impediment to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women and that the increase in cases of violence against women and girls, as a result of lockdown measures can worsen the situation;

**Recognizing** that poverty, illiteracy, and women's limited access to means of production, resources and decision-making processes, amplified by the pandemic, preclude women from fully playing their role in achieving sustainable development and peace in their countries;

**Noting** that ignoring the rights of women and girls in public and private spheres limits their cultural, social and economic development;

**Endorsing** the conclusions of the 7th Ministerial Conference on the Role of Women in the Development of Member States of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso on November 30<sup>th</sup> and December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018.

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1. **Commend** the initiatives, efforts and contributions of the Burkina Faso as the Chair of the Seventh Session of the Ministerial Conference on Women in the OIC Member States;
2. **Welcome** the entry into force of the Statute of the Women Development Organization of the OIC Member States, based in Cairo, and acknowledge its pivotal role in the architecture of women's development within the OIC system;
3. **Welcome** the efforts to review the prevailing discourse and ensure the prevalence of the tolerant message of Islam and its non-discriminatory and egalitarian nature which is considered the core message of the divine texts, and *encourage* Member States to take advantage of such efforts in ensuring the empowerment of women and girls and the protection of their rights;
4. **Urge** Member States to ensure that recovery programs of the pandemic take into account the disproportionate share of unpaid care that women and girls carry and the key role played by them to ensure a complete and healthy recovery;
5. **Encourage** Member States to enhance the resilience of their societies, through investing in the necessary infrastructure and human resources needed to prepare for possible similar emergencies, and take into account the crucial role of women and girls in this context;

6. **Call on** Member States to increase cooperation for the containment and mitigation of the pandemic, including by exchanging information, scientific knowledge and best practices, and to ensure that these efforts are responsive to women's specific needs in order to ensure that women and girls are not disproportionately affected or left behind in response efforts;
7. **Welcome** the improvements in the national legislations governing the rights of women in the OIC Member States, and ask for further consolidation of these legislations in order to protect and empower women during the pandemic, including legislations to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls;
8. **Urge** countries to take the necessary steps to ensure accessible, available, affordable and quality health-care services for women and girls during the pandemic, equal access for women and girls to the opportunities and resources in Member States;
9. **Call upon** Member States to ensure women and girls' access to quality education and training, resources and technologies of production, and to promote their participation in decision-making;
10. **Encourages** Member States to introduce, adjust or expand national social protection programmes to ensure access to social protection and assistance programmes that would support those affected by COVID-19, especially women and girls, by expanding the reach and benefit levels of social assistance programmes, including to those working in the informal sector, and to ensure that the information on the availability of and ways to access these social protection and assistance programmes is widely available and accessible to all women and girls;
11. **Urge** Member States, in conjunction with the relevant regional and international organizations, to embark on sustainable pandemic preparedness, response and recovery planning, taking into account that such planning is sensitive to the specific needs of women and girls;
12. **Invite** member States to take the necessary measures to remove all obstacles to women's leadership and full, equal and meaningful participation in the development, design and implementation of national response and recovery policies and strategies to address the COVID-19 outbreak;
13. **Urge** Member States to undertake the necessary steps to ensure the protection of the role of the family in the relevant regional and international fora as an additional tool to enhance the protection and empowerment of women;
14. **Express** strong solidarity with women of Palestine, affirming our commitment to work for enhancing women's capacity and support to women organization to address the challenges confronting women in Palestine;
15. **Call on** the Member States to continue to cooperate and coordinate their policies and programs to enhance regional and OIC-wide cooperation, in coordination with the General Secretariat and relevant OIC institutions, and commend the proposal of the Arab republic of Egypt to hold meetings under its leadership, as the Chair of the Eighth Session of the Ministerial Conference on Women in the OIC Member States, to promote

coherence and organizational synergy within the OIC-system with respect to women's affairs;

16. **Reaffirm** the importance of involving women in the mechanisms of conflict resolution and mediation, the process of interreligious dialogue and the search for solutions to the phenomena of growing terrorism and extremism;
17. **Invite** Member States to improve the means of collaboration at the national, bilateral and multilateral levels in order to promote the sharing of experiences and good practices as well as the mobilization of resources;
18. **Call upon** all the Member States and international partners to cooperate in advancing the priorities established at this conference;
19. **Express** appreciation to the OIC General Secretariat for the continuing efforts in the field of the promotion and protection of the rights of women and their empowerment;
20. **Urge** the Secretary General to continue his activities aiming to consolidate Islamic Solidarity among Member States in order to promote the role of women in the development of the Member States and to follow up the implementation process of the conclusions of the 8th Ministerial Conference on Women's Issues and to report to the next session;
21. **Express** our sincere thanks and appreciation to the Arab Republic of Egypt for hosting and organizing the Eighth Session of the Ministerial Conference on Women in the OIC Member States;
22. **Decide** to send a message of grateful thanks to H.E. President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi for so kindly granting his patronage to this Conference and for honoring its opening ceremony with his presence.

**Done in Cairo on 08 July 2021**