

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Mission Permanente d'Observation
de l'Organisation de la Conference Islamique
auprès des Nations Unies



Permanent Observer Mission
of the Organization of the Islamic Conference
to the United Nations

البعثة المراقبة الدائمة لمنظمة المؤتمر الإسلامي لدى الأمم المتحدة

Statement by

H.E. Mr. Ufuk Gokcen

**Permanent Observer of
the Organization of the Islamic Conference
to the United Nations in New York**

**at the 2010 Substantive Session of the
Economic and Social Council**

**“Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in
regard to gender equality and empowerment of women”**

**delivered by
Mehmet Kalyoncu
Adviser to Ambassador**

**United Nations Headquarters
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Mr. President

First and foremost, the Organization of the Islamic Conference recognizes and congratulates all women of the world for their tremendous achievements in various fields including economic, political and social spheres throughout the history. It is a fact that securing peace and progress in a society, and the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms require the active participation and contribution of women.

The 2010 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council once again reminds us all our responsibility to check our performance and achievements in terms of improving the conditions, and attaining gender equality for women. Women have always contributed in building strong, civilized and healthy societies, which in turn paved way to bringing about sustainable peace and harmony.

The challenges ahead of women have always been huge and overwhelming. In today's world, although the rights of women have been given priority in the international community's agenda, and some significant progress has also been made, in many parts of the world, women are still deprived of their fundamental rights. They are subject to various forms of violence and discrimination. The international community has to strengthen its coordinated efforts to help women across the world prosper and take active role in overcoming the various challenges facing us all.

Violence against women constitutes a shameful crime. It must be dealt with appropriate legislative regulations in all societies. The women's rights should be protected through various legal means and mechanisms in order to help them live with honor, dignity, and free of fear and discrimination.

Mr. President

Today, unfortunately, women are still viewed as secondary beings by the many, including some of those self-appointed defenders of women's rights. There are historical roots of this way of ill thinking. The Greek philosopher Aristotle suggested that women are "imperfect men," hence incomplete beings; inherently subject to subordination and enslavement. This paradigm misleadingly entailed the association of reason with men, and the association of emotion as an inferior quality with women.

For us, a woman is part of a whole, a part that renders the other half useful and meaningful. We believe that when the two halves come together, the true unity and character of humanity appears. When this unity does not exist, humanity does not exist.

Islam as a religion of peace and equality pioneered the protection of the rights of women, and stood against all injustices imposed onto women. Islam has stood for their rights to education, equal treatment, and participation in decision-making. Islam advocates the emancipation of women, and calls for their full rights as equal partners

of men in the society. Islamic teachings strongly reject all forms of violence against women, and uphold their rights.

Mr. President

The Organization of the Islamic Conference remains committed to the rights and freedoms of women. To empower women, the OIC has been working in coordination with the Member States and other stakeholders in the international community. The OIC's Ten Year Program of Action puts a heavy emphasis on improving the conditions and protecting the rights of the women. The Program calls upon the OIC member states to revise their respective laws in order to enable the advancement of women in Muslim societies in economic, cultural, social and political fields, and in order to protect women from all forms of violence and discrimination.

The first OIC Ministerial Conference on Women held in Istanbul in November 2006 adopted the OIC Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women (OPAAW), and stressed the following:

- 1- Gender equality, women's empowerment, and their political, social and economic participation are central to the eradication of poverty, and to the achievement of sustainable development.
- 2- Women's participation in decision-making at all levels is desirable for the development of the OIC Member States.
- 3- The role of education for women's empowerment in general, and for poverty eradication in particular is critical in eliminating gender inequality, and in increasing women's access to socio-economic and political opportunity spaces.
- 4- Violence as a global phenomenon constitutes a violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of women, as well as an obstacle to the advancement of women.

Moreover, in 2008 the OIC has launched in cooperation with the UNDP the OIC Businesswomen Information Network to provide a single platform to all the women entrepreneurs in the OIC countries, and to foster business partnerships among them. Similarly, the 37th Council of Foreign Ministers Meeting of the OIC held in Dushanbe, Tajikistan in May 2010 announced the establishment of the OIC Women Center in Cairo to spearhead women's active participation in every aspect of life in the OIC member states.

In conclusion, Mr. President

The Organization of the Islamic Conference is committed to working together with its member states and all other stakeholders in the international community in order not only to improve the conditions for and protect the rights of women, but also to make substantial and credible progress in attaining all the Millennium Development Goals by the year 2015.

Thank You.