



منظمة التعاون الإسلامي

**SPEECH
OF AMBASSADOR HAMEED A OPELOYERU
ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE
ORGANISATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION
AT THE
SIXTH SESSION OF THE MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE
ON THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF
OIC MEMBER STATES
“STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE MEMBER STATES IN THE
LIGHT OF CURRENT CHALLENGES”**

**ISTANBUL – REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
01 – 03 NOVEMBER 2016
(01 – 03 SAFAR 1438H)**

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE BENEFICENT, THE MERCIFUL

Your Excellency, President Recep Tayeb Erdogan,

**Your Excellency, Emine Erdogan,
The First Lady of the Republic of Turkey,**

**Your Excellency Dr. Fatma Sayan KAYA,
Honourable Minister of Family and Social Policy of the Republic of
Turkey,**

**Your Excellency Prof. Hijran HUSEYNOVA,
Chairperson of State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs,**

Distinguished Delegates,

Respected Ladies and Gentlemen,

As-salam alaykum wa rahmatullah wa barakaatuh,

On behalf of the leadership of the OIC General Secretariat, it gives me great pleasure to address the opening ceremony of the 6th session of the Ministerial Conference on the Role of Women in the Development of OIC Member States. First and foremost, permit to express my most sincere appreciation to the President, Government and people of the Republic of Turkey for hosting this important Conference and for the excellent arrangements put in place to ensure the success of this epoch-making event.

I wish to also welcome all members of the participating delegations, ministers, heads of delegation and representatives of the various OIC institutions and other international organisations, as well as experts who are here today to express their commitment to promoting women advancement and empowerment in the Muslim world and beyond and to contribute to enhancing women's full participation in the development process and a brighter future for societies. Let me also pay homage to the sterling contributions of the Republic

of Azerbaijan, the Chairman of the 5th session of this conference, which have paved the way for the appreciable progress recorded on the OIC agenda for women empowerment and gender mainstreaming within the OIC space.

Mr. President
Your Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is the first session to be held since the adoption of the OIC-2025 by the 13th session of the Islamic Summit conference, which was hosted by Republic of Turkey, in Istanbul on 14-15th April 2016, which. adopted the outcomes of the meeting of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts to review the OIC Plan of Action on the Advancement of Women (OPAAW). Ever since, our member states have indicated greater interest in seeing to the implementation of this policy document, considering the socio-economic value in addressing the conditions of women within its over-all poverty alleviation and social protection strategies.

Throughout history, women have played an effective role in the social, political, cultural and economic lives of mankind. They have contributed to building civilizations and training generations. Yet women and young girls till today continue to face exclusion, marginalization and socio-economic difficulties, which has greatly constrained our developmental aspirations and advancement.

This ugly situation is further exacerbated by the psychological crises women face due to armed conflicts, fragility and instability, which the Muslim world is going through. These, as you know, require policies, strategies and programmes, aimed at mobilising the energies of all segments of our populations, even as we strengthen those laws and legislations aimed at enhancing women participation in the development of Member States and Muslim societies. Appropriately, the approach will enable them to overcome the daunting challenges faced by women as one of the vulnerable groups in our societies.

Mr. President

**Your Excellencies
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,**

A historical review of the efforts made by the OIC to advance the role of women must not fail to mention that this journey began when the 32nd session of the Council of Foreign Ministers adopted a resolution calling for a ministerial conference to consider the role of women in the development of OIC Member States. Also to be mentioned are the outcomes of the first session of the ministerial conference on the subject held in Turkey on 20 and 21 November 2006 with regard to the preparation of the OIC Plan of Action on the Advancement of Women (OPAAW). This plan was adopted during the 2nd session of the Ministerial Conference held in Cairo on 24 and 25 November 2008. The OIC was able to prepare this plan taking into account the fact that women and men are mutually complementing elements in the building of societies and civilizations as confirmed by the verses of the Quran and the traditions of the Prophet. This plan constitutes a practical approach reflecting the commitment of the Member States to address a number of challenges facing women.

It is in this regard that the agenda of this session is considered very crucial to the realization of the various objectives set out by our leaders towards enhancement of the role of women in socio-economic development of OIC member states. Let me pay homage to the work of the Senior Officials Committee, which has made several recommendations to this Ministerial session. The quality of the debate and the various presentations made are pointers to the fact that the outcome of this meeting will provide adequate and desired momentum for our joint endeavours on women empowerment.

To this end, the need for expeditious execution of the Statute of the Organisation of Women's Development in OIC Member States cannot be over-emphasised. This new specialised institution will undoubtedly provide the required executive framework for the various resolutions taken by the OIC. Equally important is your current review of the amended OIC Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women (OPAAW) with a view to adopting the said document. I am positive that the General Secretariat and its competent institutions will proceed very rapidly with the implementation of the various provisions of the Plan of Action.

Another important milestone in our march towards better livelihood for women and the mainstreaming of their role in all spheres is the current proposal by the Republic of Turkey to create an Advisory framework to assist this Conference inter-sessionally in realizing its various objectives of deepening research and giving visibility to the role of women in the Muslim world. I wish to also commend the valuable work done by the Senior Officials and would wish to commend their findings on this important initiative by Turkey for your kind approbation.

Mr President
The First Lady
Your Excellencies
Distinguished Delegates

I am pleased to note that this meeting has given favourable consideration to the decision of the 13th Islamic Summit held here in Istanbul on 14-15 April 2016 as well as the resolution of the 43nd Council of Foreign Ministers, according OIC Secretary General the prerogative of appointing OIC Goodwill Ambassadors in the domain of Women Empowerment.

Finally, let me wish this 6th Ministerial Conference a resounding success.

Wa salaam alaykum wa rahmatullah wa barakaatuh.
