



منظمة التعاون الإسلامي

Organisation of Islamic Cooperation  
Organisation de la Coopération Islamique



جمهورية مصر العربية  
The Arab Republic of Egypt



## **Eighth Session of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Ministerial Conference on Women “Preserving the Achievements of Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women in Light of the COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond”**

— Cairo - The Arab Republic of Egypt —

from 6 to 8 July 2021

CONCEPT NOTE





## BACKGROUND

OIC member states are convinced that sustainable development and peace cannot be achieved without ensuring respect for international, regional and national commitments, including the ones towards the promotion and protection of human rights of women as enshrined in CEDAW, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (the Fourth World Conference on Women 1995), and the 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly entitled “Women2000” Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the 21st Century”.

The conviction of the OIC countries in the importance of respecting and preserving women’s rights, which are an integral part of human rights, was reflected in all the documents and instruments of the Islamic cooperation system, the most important of which are the OIC 2025 Work Programme, the OIC Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women (OPAAW) and the relevant decisions and resolutions of the Islamic Summit and the Council of Foreign Ministers. Over the past two decades, the Organization has held seven sessions of the Ministerial Conference on Women.

Since November 2019, COVID-19 outbreak was regarded as a pandemic. A multifaceted catastrophe with a devastating impact on health, economic, environmental and social facets of people’s lives all over the world. However, while COVID-19 is affecting everyone and everywhere, it has disproportionate repercussions on women and girls.

Women and girls are facing a wide range of challenges during the COVID-19 outbreak. Risk of domestic violence, increased amount of unpaid care work, overwhelmed health systems and redirection of essential resources for women and girls, losses in economic opportunities and many other challenges that exacerbate women and girls’ political, social and economic status.

The world is witnessing new realities amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, and indeed sustainable development is put at huge risk of many setbacks, and this will undoubtedly impact progress on gender equality and the empowerment of women. Over last decades, more girls have been going to school, fewer girls have been forced into early marriage, more women have been serving in parliament and positions of leadership, and laws have been reformed to advance gender equality.



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As countries face the catastrophic consequences of COVID-19 pandemic, capitalizing on women's capabilities and strength is key for effective dealing with the pandemic and sound recovery. The pandemic has also exhibited the importance of women's leadership and unveiled innovative approaches and responses that regarded women's and girls' needs during the pandemic all over the world.



In an immediate response by OIC member states to the outbreak, it is of utmost importance that the Eighth Session's theme focuses on the repercussions of COVID -19 on women and their special needs in OIC member states and the needed response on the short, medium and long terms and beyond. The Session will be a good opportunity to share our national experiences in this regard, including follow up on the implementation of the policies and programs relevant to such responses.

## PURPOSE & OBJECTIVE

According to Resolution No. 18/7-W on "The Venue and Date of the Eight Ministerial Conference on Women" which was adopted at the Seventh Ministerial Conference on the Role of Women in the Development of the OIC Member States (Session of Women Empowerment in Member States: Challenges and Prospects), in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso November/December 2018, to Hold the Eighth session of OIC Ministerial Conference on Women in the Arab Republic of Egypt in 2020. And since the year 2020 faced the Global pandemic of COVID-19 which hindered hosting the conference at that time, The Arab Republic of Egypt is gladly hosting the 8th OIC Ministerial Conference on women in Cairo, July 2021 with the purpose of highlighting the national, regional and international efforts and best practices to respond to the special needs of women and girls, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Indicators and techniques that can be used to monitor rapid responses to COVID-19 will also be presented.

Since OIC member states highly support the promotion of the role of women in society as a major factor of development and agent of change, it is very important to highlight the experiences amongst women leaders in OIC member states during Covid-19 pandemic. The conference will be an opportunity for exchanging national experiences in the areas of effective responses to the pandemic from a gender perspective, tools and methods to address the negative impacts of the pandemic on women and girls. Challenges and barriers that face the implementation of women policies and responses to COVID-19 will also be discussed. The conference will garner commitments to support innovative practices and initiatives led by OIC countries on the regional and international levels.



The conference will also highlight the goals and objectives of the Women Development Organization (WDO) and its role as the women machinery within the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) system as well as presenting the main objectives of establishing it. It will also address the main areas of focus that the WDO will be working on in alignment with the OIC's Plan of Action for the advancement of women OPAAW that was adopted by the 6th session of the ministerial conference on the role of women in the development of the OIC member states.

## **PARTICIPANTS**

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Under the auspices of H.E. President Abdel Fattah El Sisi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Session will be attended by ministers and experts in Charge of Women's Affairs, representatives of OIC relevant subsidiary organs and specialized agencies, UN Agencies, policy makers.

## **SIDE EVENTS**

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The list of side events will be communicated in due time.