

Thank You Madam Chair,

I am honored to participate in this significant forum and pleased to see the light shed on the issue of minority women.

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation has addressed the issue of minorities as well as women's rights in its Charter, the Ten Year Program of Action, as well as in its resolutions adopted by its Council of Forum Ministers. All 57 Member States of the OIC have adopted resolutions on Muslim women and their role in the development of Islamic society calling for specific Ministerial Conference on Women which took place in 2006 in the Republic of Turkey. In the Conference, all Member States pledged to improve the conditions of women in their country as well as establish the OIC Plan of Action which has the objectives to eradicate poverty, raise women's political participation, provide equal opportunities, and eliminate all forms of discrimination. There are many examples, just to pinpoint one would be OIC's host country, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in which the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz recently announced a royal decree of women's participation in the *Shura Council* (Consultative Assembly) as well as vote and nominate themselves in the municipal council elections.

As for Muslim minorities, the OIC General Secretariat has a dedicated department reaching out to Muslim Minorities around the world as they make up a third of the Muslim population. The Department exerts every effort through dialogue with all parties including the Governments of the concerned countries to achieve appropriate solutions. The Minorities and Communities Department also engages in symposiums, we have held symposiums in the Republic of Mozambique, the Republic of South Korea, and the Republic of Poland, with the aim of addressing the issues and challenges facing Muslim minorities in these specific regions. Our next symposium is scheduled to take place in Washington D.C., USA in November of next year.

Madam Chair,

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation has executed many projects for Muslim minorities and communities benefiting women minorities, and we stand ready for any ventures and proposals for projects regarding women minority rights