



المؤتمر العالمي:
تعليم الفتيات في المجتمعات المسلمة: التحديات والفرص
The International Conference on: Girls' Education in Muslim Communities:
Challenges and Opportunities



Islamabad Declaration on Girls' Education in Muslim Communities

Issued by:

The International Conference on Girls' Education in Muslim Communities: Challenges and Opportunities

Islamabad, Islamic Republic of Pakistan
11–12 January 2025 / 11–12 Rajab 1446 AH



From Islamabad, the capital city of Pakistan, and representing Islamic peoples across various sects and schools of thought, this declaration is issued under the auspices of His Excellency the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Mr. Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, and in the presence of His Excellency Sheikh Dr. Mohammed bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, Secretary-General of the Muslim World League and Chairman of the Organization of Muslim Scholars. This international assembly, graced by the attendance of distinguished muftis, scholars, and imams from the Islamic world and minority Muslim communities, convened in response to the initiative promoting girls' education, thereby reflecting Islam's strong emphasis on human rights.

In the presence of His Excellency Dr. Hissein Brahim Taha, Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), representing its 57 Member States, the second-largest international organization following the United Nations, the assembly addressed key issues in girls' education.

The presence of the Global Advocate for Girls' Education and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Ms. Malala Yousafzai, further honored the conference.

Participation included His Excellency the Secretary-General of the League of Islamic Universities, Professor Sami Al-Sharif, representing the vast network of public and private member universities across Islamic countries.

Furthermore, Their Excellencies, the Ministers of Education and Higher Education from Islamic countries, participated in the conference with the aim of elucidating the true image of Islam as an unwavering advocate for girls' education, free from restrictions or obstructive conditions.

The conference was further distinguished by the presence of representatives and leaders from international governmental and non-governmental organizations affiliated with the United Nations, dedicated to education, women's rights, and human rights.

Present was His Excellency Professor Francisco Rojas Aravena, Rector of the University for Peace (UPEACE), established under the auspices of the United Nations and ceremonially chaired by His Excellency the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Mr. Mohammed Abdrabuh Al-Yami, Director-General of the Union of OIC News Agencies (UNA), was also in attendance, alongside leaders and representatives of news agencies from Islamic countries who actively participated in the initiative's events and provided extensive media support.

Under the esteemed patronage of the Prime Minister of Pakistan, His Excellency Mr. Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, and initiated by His Excellency Sheikh Dr. Mohammed bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, Secretary-General of the Muslim World League and Chairman of the Organization of Muslim Scholars, the International Conference on Girls' Education in Muslim Communities: Challenges and Opportunities was convened. This significant gathering, demonstrating a profound sense of responsibility toward the Islamic peoples and the pillars of their advancement, aims to enhance girls' education in alignment with Islamic and civilizational principles. It seeks to develop effective solutions to the challenges that hinder their educational opportunities and to dispel related misconceptions. With substantial presence, active commitment, and strong collaboration, the endorsers of this historic declaration have united, marking the implementation of practical and impactful strategies that commenced on the final day of the conference with the signing of critical agreements among key stakeholders to ensure girls' access to educational rights.

Drawing inspiration from the principles enshrined in two historic charters—the Charter of Makkah and the Charter for Building Bridges Between Islamic Schools of Thought and Sects, issued by the Muslim World League and unanimously endorsed by Muslim scholars from their unifying Qibla in the Holy City of Mecca—both charters emphasize the empowerment of women through education at all levels, to be implemented within a balanced framework that upholds their intrinsic nature, aligns with the teachings and elevated principles of Islam, and opposes any breach of their rights, neglect of their role, degradation of their dignity, or diminishment of their status.

After reviewing the outcomes of the Exclusive Session of esteemed Muftis, scholars of the Ummah, and representatives of Fiqh councils, held on Friday, the 10th of Rajab, 1446 AH, at the Conference Center in the capital of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Islamabad, under the leadership of His Excellency Sheikh Dr. Mohammed bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, Secretary-General of the Muslim World League and Chairman of the Organization of Muslim Scholars, and within the framework of the Muslim World League's initiative: "Girls' Education in Muslim Communities".

An esteemed assembly convened, comprising prominent Muftis from the Islamic world, members of scholars' councils and organizations, representatives from the Islamic Fiqh Council affiliated with the Muslim World League, and the International Islamic Fiqh Academy affiliated with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. This assembly of scholars addressed a matter of significant importance to the Islamic world: ensuring the right of girls to education—"without limitations" and "free from restrictive conditions."

The Session was concluded by affirming that women's education is a legitimate right unanimously agreed upon by the scholars of the Islamic Ummah. This principle is emanated from the teachings of Sharia, which makes the pursuit of knowledge an obligation for every Muslim, whether male or female. They emphasized that this right must not be restricted by age, level, or specific field of study, and that no reservations on this matter should be attributed to Islamic law. Scholars from various schools of thought and sects, historically and contemporarily, have reached a consensus on the legitimacy of women's education, equating it with that of men.

They emphasized the serious risk of misinterpreting Sharia texts and violating their overarching purposes to legitimize misconceptions about women's education. This includes supporting cultural patterns and traditions or pursuing other objectives. They clarified that such wrongful actions represent one of the gravest offenses against Sharia.

Acknowledging the strategic and paramount importance of this unprecedented gathering of diverse and influential Islamic leaders, it is emphasized that issues deeply rooted in religious ideology cannot be resolved effectively through political or legal recourse, economic sanctions, or other similar measures. Instead, these matters necessitate active and impactful religious participation that elucidates the true religious perspective. Resolution can only be facilitated through the authoritative guidance of distinguished scholars of the Islamic Ummah, who are endowed with the necessary authority to provide decisive religious insights on such critical matters.

Upon reviewing the circumstances surrounding girls' education in Muslim communities worldwide, including those regions affected by conflict and instability where opportunities are scarce and challenges are significant, and taking into account the prevailing global challenges and societal changes that could impede progress on development efforts, the following resolutions have been collectively agreed upon:

1. This groundbreaking transformation on a pivotal issue affecting the present and future of Muslim communities deserves high praise. For the first time, it has brought together influential Muslim religious leaders, representing hundreds of millions across the Islamic world. This landmark event has taken a decisive and rightful course, advocating for girls' education through a faith-based perspective and a thoughtful, constructive approach.

2. Emphasizing that girls' education is not only a religious obligation but also an urgent societal necessity. It is a fundamental right safeguarded by divine laws, mandated by Islamic teachings, reinforced by international charters, and well-established by national constitutions.

3. Drawing from the core principles of Islamic education to guide the educational process in harmony with cultural and religious identity, while incorporating national and global insights and knowledge that have advanced education and learning.
4. Uniting efforts to safeguard girls' right to education and ensure their empowerment, acknowledging that educated women play a pivotal role in fostering stable families and communities. This, in turn, promotes global peace, national harmony, and fortifies societies against challenges such as extremism, violence, crime, and atheism.
5. Issuing a caution against extremist ideologies, fatwas, and opinions rooted in cultural norms and patterns that obstruct girls' education, which constitute a regrettable perpetuation of societal biases against women. Such actions represent a grave misuse of religious principles to legitimize policies of deprivation and exclusion.
6. Mobilizing all resources to support the efforts of Islamic countries in advancing education through improved methods and content, with a particular emphasis on girls' education, ensuring it is placed at the forefront of their national priorities. This initiative aims to ensure equal access to education for all girls and fulfill international commitments to the Sustainable Development Goals.
7. Providing free scholarships to offer educational opportunities for girls affected by poverty, conflicts, and social challenges.
8. Considering with due importance the resolutions of Islamic Fiqh councils and the fatwas issued by scholarly bodies affirming women's legitimate right to acquire knowledge across diverse fields and educational levels. Priority should be given to disseminating these resolutions and fatwas, while actively addressing and countering perspectives that seek to undermine this fundamental right.
9. Promoting the enhancement of digital educational content by urging educational institutions and international organizations to create digital resources that improve girls' access to education.
10. Developing specialized educational programs for individuals with special needs by providing inclusive learning environments and qualified teaching staff. This approach aims to ensure equal opportunities for academic achievement and social participation.
11. Encouraging legislative institutions in Islamic countries to actively promote girls' education by drafting and implementing effective laws, regulations, and national policies.

12. Calling on governmental and private media institutions across the Islamic world to organize awareness campaigns and educational programs that highlight the importance of girls' education. These efforts should be coordinated with educational and media experts and include religious scholars, imams, and guides to effectively address opposition by elucidating the true principles of Islam.

13. Promoting scientific research and studies on girls' education in Islamic communities. This aims to identify optimal strategies for its advancement and to address the challenges and impediments to its development.

14. Commending the pioneering initiative of His Excellency Sheikh Dr. Mohammed bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, Secretary-General of the Muslim World League and Chairman of the Organization of Muslim Scholars. His leadership in launching the most extensive international partnership platform to support girls' education in Muslim communities, through alliances that include UN organizations, governmental bodies, and private entities, is noteworthy.

15. Declaring that anyone who rejects or opposes these well-grounded Islamic religious principles is, by the consensus of this gathering as referenced in the preamble of this Declaration, considered outside the framework of the Islamic Ummah's concepts and cannot be regarded as part of it. It is essential to disavow their ideology, whether they are an individual, an institution, or an entity—public or private.

16. Sending a decisive and clear message to religious platforms, including religious lessons and Friday sermons across the Islamic world and in minority communities: It is time to end the misrepresentation of Islam and the violation of women's rights.

17. Assigning His Excellency Sheikh Dr. Mohammed bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, Secretary-General of the Muslim World League and Chairman of the Organization of Muslim Scholars, as the initiator of this conference. He is tasked with the responsibility of communicating all resolutions of the conference, overseeing their implementation, and ensuring the necessary financial and moral support. His duties extend to:

- Islamic governments, through His Excellency the Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, in accordance with the terms of the agreement signed between the two parties.

- Governmental and private educational institutions in Islamic countries and in countries with Muslim minorities.

In conclusion, the conference participants expressed their appreciation to the Prime Minister's Office of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for its efforts in hosting and supporting the event. They also extended their gratitude to the Muslim World League for its exemplary organization. The participants urged the initiator of the conference to establish a permanent committee to oversee the implementation of the outcomes of this significant event, including the agreements signed, which lay the foundation for impactful action as emphasized in the initiator's opening remarks. These remarks included the statement: "This initiative, with God's help, will be both effective and tangible through the substantive agreements signed. It will not be a temporary appeal, an empty declaration, or simply a symbolic stance. Rather, it will represent a qualitative transformation in advocating for girls' education—bringing prosperity to every deprived girl and to every community in dire need of the contributions of both its sons and daughters equally."

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