



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**

11–12 January 2025 / 11–12 Rajab 1446 AH



Praise be to Allah, and blessings and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah, his family, his companions, and those who follow him.

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.

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—the driving force behind the Girls' Education in Muslim Communities initiative—senior muftis, scholars, and imams from both the Muslim world and Muslim minority countries convened. This assembly was in response to the initiative, thereby reflecting the true teachings of Islam and the principles of human rights.

Also in attendance were:

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.

Ms. Malala Yousafzai, Global Advocate for Girls' Education and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate.

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

Their Excellencies, the Ministers of General Education and Higher Education from Islamic countries, who 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.

Representatives and leaders from international governmental bodies affiliated with the United Nations and other non-governmental organizations dedicated to education, women's rights, and human rights.

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), alongside leaders and representatives of news agencies from Islamic countries who actively participated in the initiative's events and provided extensive media support.

With such a comprehensive assembly, their profound determination and strong alliance came together, endorsing this historic declaration, which marks a significant phase beginning with the conference's conclusion and the signing of critical agreements among key stakeholders to ensure girls' access to educational rights.

The event, convened under the esteemed patronage of the Prime Minister of Pakistan, His Excellency Mr. Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, was in response to the 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, marking the International Conference on Girls' Education in Muslim Communities: Challenges and Opportunities.

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.

Drawing inspiration from the principles embedded 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 gathered next to their unifying Qibla in the Holy City of Makkah—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 Closed Session, which included 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 Islamabad, capital of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 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":

A distinguished assembly was 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 concluded by affirming that women's education is a legitimate right unanimously agreed upon by the scholars of the Islamic Ummah. This principle emanates from the teachings of Sharia, which obligate the pursuit of knowledge for every Muslim, regardless of gender. The scholars emphasized that this right must not be restricted by age, educational level, or field of study, and that no reservations concerning this matter should be attributed to Islamic law. Scholars from various schools of thought and sects, both historically and contemporarily, have affirmed that women's education should be regarded with the same legitimacy as men's.

Acknowledging the strategic and decisive importance of this unprecedented gathering of diverse and influential Islamic leaders to address a pressing issue that had previously lacked decisive religious engagement, 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 concerning a pivotal issue that affects the present and future of Muslim communities deserves high praise. For the first time, it has convened 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 from a faith-based perspective with 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 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, this approach incorporates national and global insights that have advanced education and learning.
4. Uniting efforts to safeguard the right of girls to education and ensure their empowerment, acknowledging that educated women play a pivotal role in fostering stable families and communities. This promotes global peace, national harmony, and strengthens 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 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 appropriate learning environments and qualified teaching staff. This approach aims to ensure compatible 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, adopting optimal strategies for its advancement and addressing 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, for 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.

15. To consider 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 across the Islamic world and in minority communities; this includes religious lessons and Friday sermons: Enough with the abuse of Islam and women's rights.

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

The 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, will not merely be a 'call,' a 'declaration,' or simply a 'statement of stance.' Rather, it will represent a qualitative transformation in supporting girls' education—a change that will bring joy to every deprived girl and benefit society as a whole, as both men and women are essential to its success.

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