



Shared Prosperity Dignified Life



Arab Declaration on Progress in the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action after 25 years (Amman, 28 November 2019)

Participants, Arab State representatives concerned with women's affairs, met at the High-level Meeting on Progress in the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action after 25 years (1995), held in Amman on 28 November 2019, and stressed that the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action remained one of the choices and strategic pathways for the advancement of women, and that they contributed to prosperous and peaceful societies based on gender equality, non-discrimination and equal opportunities, in which women participated equally in the development process. They emphasized the following:

1. Progress made in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 25 years after their adoption provides an appropriate opportunity to consider achievements and identify challenges and gaps to be addressed. This review coincides with the five-year anniversary of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which pays particular attention to gender equality in its Goals, the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, and the fortieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women by the General Assembly of the United Nations (1979). All of this gives additional impetus to women's issues at the national, regional and international levels, and enriches the substantive dimensions of the review.

2. Arab States that have conducted national reviews to reflect on achievements and challenges, despite security situations and worsening crises that have negatively affected a number of them, have exerted significant efforts.

3. Arab States have made progress over the past five years in implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, reflected in increased social awareness on the importance of the role of women, and in the numerous initiatives adopted to empower and ensure the advancement of women and increase their representation and participation in political, social, economic and public life and in decision-making positions. Achievements include the following:

(a) Developing and adopting policies, strategies and action plans aimed at advancing the status of women in general; and ones aimed at combating violence against women, improving services for women in general and under all social and environmental conditions, integrating a gender equality and equal opportunity perspective into the work of Governments and public administrations, and adopting national action plans to implement resolution 1325;

(b) Continuing to review and develop national legislation that ensured more consistency with international commitments, including strengthening the protection of women and girls, whether through the adoption of legislation on violence against women or on sexual harassment, or through the repeal or amendment of articles and legal texts that discriminate against women;

(c) Launching innovative initiatives and undertaking activities and programmes on women and girls' access to education and health services that contributed to improving their status, through linking education outputs to labour market requirements, and through health insurance and other services;

(d) Supporting and promoting civil society organizations in their work to advance the role of women, achieve gender equality and empower women.

4. Despite the importance of these achievements, it should be noted that some Arab States still face a number of development challenges, such as high poverty and unemployment rates, and a widening gap between social classes, which affect the resources available to them to implement their development goals and plans and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

5. Challenges are exacerbated by war, terrorism, armed conflict and coercive measures faced by some Arab States, and their devastating effects on the history and civilization of the Arab region and its natural resources and infrastructure, in addition to negative social and economic impacts, especially on women and children suffering from marginalization and violence, including child marriage, sexual violence and absence of health and education services, particularly in asylum and displacement situations.

6. The challenges faced by Palestinian women continue to be compounded by the Israeli occupation. Women, in addition to suffering from home demolitions, forced displacement and arbitrary arrest, also suffer from an absence of basic services that affect all aspects of life, including health, education and security. The suffering of women continues in the occupied Arab Syrian Golan, Shebaa Farms, Kfar Chouba Hills and the north of Ghajar village, resulting from the Israeli occupation and its measures aimed at perpetuating the occupation. The international community must work to end the occupation and demand that Israel, the occupying power, implement all related United Nations resolutions, including those calling for the protection of women and girls living under occupation, and the release of all prisoners.

7. Following the review of progress in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 25 years after their adoption, it is important to emphasize the following:

(a) Continue reviewing national legislation for further development and amendment, eliminate all forms of discrimination against women, take measures to address discriminatory violations and practices, expedite the development of public policies and programmes to combat violence against women in the private and public spheres, and commend achievements in this field;

(b) Strengthen commitment to Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security to ensure the prevention, protection and participation of women and girls in times of peace and armed conflict and thereafter, and in relief, reconstruction and peacebuilding work, and develop relevant national plans consistent with national strategies and priorities;

(c) Call upon the Security Council to adopt a new resolution succeeding resolution 1325 and others based on it, so as to address gaps in the women, peace and security agenda, which does not address the situation of women in the State of Palestine suffering under Israeli occupation;

(d) Continue to address and raise awareness about negative and discriminatory social stereotypes that aggravate gender inequalities, and promote the sharing of responsibilities within the family between women and men in unpaid care work, thus contributing to enhancing work-life balance;

(e) Continue reviewing social protection policies and programmes to ensure integration and to provide a comprehensive protection system that includes social security and health insurance for all groups, including women working in the informal sector;

(f) Provide and develop preventive, protective, health, legal, judicial, social and economic services for victims and survivors of violence, ensure their availability, accessibility and quality, and draw on international standards in that regard;

(g) Monitor and address disparities in development levels between rural, remote areas and refugee camps on the one hand, and urban areas on the other, to ensure that marginalized women benefit equally from development programmes;

(h) Continue working to ensure women's access to decision-making positions by providing tools and measures, including information and communications technology, to ensure equal participation of women and men;

(i) Continue supporting and developing the work of national women's machineries, allocate financial and human resources and build their capacity to enable them to fulfil their role in improving the status of women at the national level and in implementing related national policies;

(j) Continue developing gender-disaggregated statistical information and data systems, and make them available to decision makers to develop, endorse, adopt and implement national strategies, policies and plans aimed at addressing the imbalance in the status of women and ensure their advancement;

(k) Continue to work jointly at the Arab level and strengthen regional and international partnerships to develop programmes and policies that contribute to improving the status of women;

(l) Continue monitoring and assessing progress in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and work on bridging gaps over the next five years.

8. Tribute must be paid to resilient Arab women struggling in all fields and at the national, regional and global levels.

In conclusion, participants commended the efforts of the League of Arab States, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the Arab Women Organization (AWO), which contributed to the preparation of the regional review on progress in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action after twenty-five years, to identify trends and priorities in the region over the next five years towards achieving gender equality and women's empowerment.