

MUSCAT DECLARATION: TOWARDS THE ACHIEVEMENT OF  
GENDER JUSTICE IN THE ARAB REGION

The Committee adopted the Muscat Declaration: Towards the Achievement of Gender Justice in the Arab Region, set out as follows:

*We*, the ministers, leaders and representatives of national machineries for the advancement of women in the Arab region, participating in the seventh session of the Committee on Women of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), held in Muscat on 20 and 21 January 2016, affirm our commitment to jointly work towards achieving gender justice as a foundation for ensuring sustainable development and security in the Arab region;

*Recognize* that the full participation of women in economic, social, cultural, civil and political affairs at all levels demands equality in the distribution of roles between men and women in the family and society as a whole;

*Reaffirm* our commitment to implementing international treaties on women's rights, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century", Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008), and other resolutions on women, peace and security;

*Welcome* the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its related goals, endorsed by world leaders in September 2015, as an integrated development plan driving progress, development, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in the Arab region; also welcome the adoption of the Tunis Declaration on Social Justice in the Arab Region at the twenty-eighth ESCWA ministerial session as a political commitment that promotes policies aimed at achieving justice as a primary goal of development policy;

*Affirm* our responsibility and that of all stakeholders to implement the Sustainable Development Goals, especially the goal on gender equality and its related targets as a key regional and national priority;

*Note* that, despite significant progress towards achieving gender equality, there remains a considerable degree of discrimination against women because of fragmented approaches to achieving gender justice that overlook many elements of this broad concept;

*Also note* that the Arab region requires a more modern religious discourse, especially regarding gender equality;

*Condemn* all forms of terrorism, armed conflict and the Israeli occupation that negatively affect the status of women in general, and impede the achievement of gender justice in the Arab region;

*Acknowledge* the need to adopt a comprehensive approach to gender justice, with two principal components: ensuring accountability by determining effective national accountability mechanisms that limit discriminatory measures, and achieving equality by eliminating all forms of discrimination between men and women;

*Confirm* our commitment to implement the following measures and procedures to achieve gender justice in its broadest form, including ensuring gender equality and accountability:

- Take appropriate measures to implement international treaties on equality and eliminating discrimination that member States have ratified, especially CEDAW;
- Harmonize national legislation with international and regional commitments ratified by member States, so as to ensure the repeal of all discriminatory laws;
- Bridge the gap between laws and procedures for the protection of women and girls, and implement them in practice;
- Mainstream the principles of gender equality and women's empowerment in all national strategies, policies, plans, programmes and budgets;
- Include the concept of gender equality in the justice chain to ensure women's access to justice;
- Develop national action plans and concrete procedures to strengthen peace and support the effective participation of Arab women in identifying frameworks to protect them from violence and conflict;
- Provide statistics, data and indicators disaggregated by sex to support monitoring and evaluation processes, and offer the necessary financial and human resources in that regard;
- Support cooperation between Arab countries to promote enlightened religious interpretations, in order to ensure gender justice by harmonizing the concepts of justice and gender in religious discourse;

*Request* ESCWA, on the basis of a comprehensive approach to gender justice, to continue providing support to member States, with special focus on awareness-raising, capacity-building and preparing analytical studies;

*Applaud* the vital role of ESCWA in achieving gender justice, and urge the Centre for Women to continue cooperating with international and regional organizations working in the Arab region to achieve this goal.