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to the special session of the General Assembly entitled
“Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace
for the twenty-first century”**

Statement submitted by Federation of Islamic Medical Associations, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

The Federation of Islamic Medical Associations is an international organization that adopts male-female equality and empowerment of women in elections and appointments for various assignments and posts, projects and targeted groups for all educational and relief projects.

General perspectives of women's empowerment adopted by the Federation

In July 2009, the Federation of Islamic Medical Associations published its comprehensive Year Book titled: Women's Issues: Islamic Perspectives.

The book addresses the very pertinent women-related issues from cultural, social and religious aspects. Authors of the book included both female and male experts, and social scientists. Their papers outlined the Federation's stand on women's empowerment, equal responsibility and accountability. Specifically, the book outlined diligent and continuous endeavours for women's empowerment and various rights. The book, together with other activities, is a landmark effort to dispel the distorted image that has been imposed by some local un-Islamic traditions and culture that are in conflict with Islamic teaching and values.

Education and training

Within the scope of the Federation's aims and objectives, education and training of students and young graduates in all specialties of the medical profession is a cornerstone. In all these activities, equal attention is directed to both female and male trainees. One activity is organizing international student camps for proper up-bring and orientation. Women have equal share in both supervision and participation in these camps. The Federation emphasizes the importance of women's education in general. An educated mother will never allow her child to remain illiterate.

Global Relief

The Federation adopted multiple programs and activities in the field of medical-humanitarian relief in various parts of the world, especially those afflicted by various disasters.

This is a longstanding endeavour for the past 4 decades. It has been directed to suffering and impoverished communities, including both genders. Some activities however, were specifically directed to women. The relief leaders and personnel have been males and females.

In addition to general relief activities at times of disasters, the following are the main specific, long standing relief activities:

Save Vision Program: Launched in 2004. So far, volunteer eye specialists have conducted more than a million examinations and 100,000 cataract and corneal eye surgeries have been performed in Africa and Southeast Asia. Blindness has its impact on the lives of the affected persons, but the burden of their care falls on the shoulders of the females of the household. Children born with cataracts due to

intrauterine infections and those affected by other diseases need constant attention. Restoration of vision relieves women from an extraordinary responsibility.

Many local eye doctors, nurses and technicians, both male and female professionals, received training to widen the activity by local hands. The Federation of Islamic Medical Associations has helped establish eye hospitals and clinics in needy and deprived areas of the world.

Save smile project: Launched in 2009. Volunteering plastic surgeons and their teams, conducted hundreds of surgeries to repair cleft lip/palate anomalies, for both females and males, mainly in Africa.

Save dignity project: Launched in 2009. Volunteering surgeons and their teams conducted hundreds of vesicovaginal and vesicorectal fistulae surgeries for young women following difficult labour in Africa. This problem has serious medical, social and psychological implications on these women and their family structure. Affected women have difficulty getting treatment for this problem. Many have been abandoned by their families and others commit suicide.

Mother and child project: Launched in 2010 in Pakistan. Healthcare in Pakistan continues to be inadequate and infant mortality rate still remains high. Due to shortage of public transportation, women are not able to get themselves and their children proper medical care. In collaboration with Pakistan Islamic Medical Association, the Federal Insurance and Mitigation Administration has developed a mobile clinic program in a bus. Remote areas are reached and basic medical care is provided. Women, mothers and children benefit medically, socially and psychologically.

HIV/AIDS activities: The Federation's prophylactic activities to combat HIV/AIDS and to organize various types of care for affected subjects started in the early 1990's.

The earliest activities were conducted in sub-Saharan Africa, pioneered by the Islamic Medical Association of Uganda, a Federal Insurance and Mitigation Administration member Non-Governmental Organization. These activities have been led by medical professionals, males and females on equal footings, from African countries, and directed to both male and female individuals. It has been documented that the majority of patients in Africa are women.

Several "International Muslim Leaders Consultations" on HIV/AIDS have been conducted, with significant women-leaders participation.

In Malaysia, since 1998, centres for women and children living with HIV/AIDS have been established to provide various types of care to them. The local name of this activity is Ramah Soleha. The activity was pioneered by female and male personnel, and has acquired a Malaysian special mention Award in 2004 for excellence in care at the grass roots level.

In the Middle East and North Africa, the Federation established a prophylactic program to combat HIV/AIDS and other Sexually transmitted diseases, launched in 2005, under title "PROTECTING YOUTH FROM SEXUAL TRANSMITTED DISEASES INCLUDING HIV/AIDS". Although the prevalence of these entities are much less than other parts of the world, due to local culture, this ongoing program was based on a strategy of prevention, based on moral, spiritual and educational models. The main goal of the program is to raise public awareness and to train local

community workers/leaders to function especially among the youth. So far, more than 10,000 trainees have been qualified, nearly 50 per cent of them were women. They conducted more than 100,000 lectures/seminar in their local communities, and hundreds of media presentations, broadcasts, publications and websites, books and CDs.
