



**REPORT OF THE SEVENTH REGULAR SESSION OF THE OIC  
INDEPENDENT PERMANENT HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (IPHRC)**

**Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia 19 – 23 April, 2015**

## INDEX

SL. NO	SUBJECT	PAGE NO.
	<b>REPORT OF THE SEVENTH REGULAR SESSION THE OIC INDEPENDENT PERMANENT HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION</b>	2-22
	<b>ANNEXURES</b>	
<b>A</b>	Agenda and Program of Work of the 7 <sup>th</sup> Session	23-26
<b>B</b>	Opening Remarks by Amb. Ilham Ibrahim Ahmed, Chairperson of IPHRC	27-30
<b>C</b>	Statement by H.E Mr. Iyad Madani, Secretary General of the OIC	31-34
<b>D</b>	Detailed Communique outlining the summary of the 7 <sup>th</sup> Session proceedings	35-39
<b>E</b>	Press Statement on the theme of the 7th Session “Protection of Family Values”	40-42
<b>F</b>	Press Statement condemning the drowning of African migrants to Europe in the Mediterranean Sea	43

## INTRODUCTION

1. The Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC) of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) held its seventh regular session from 19 – 23 April 2015 in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, at the OIC General Secretariat. Representatives of OIC Member and Observer States, the Secretary General and other senior officials of the OIC, Islamic Fiqh Academy as well as media representatives attended the Session. The thematic debate of IPHRC was also attended by specially invited panellists: Ambassador Zamir Akram, the Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the UN in Geneva, Mrs. Sharon Slater, from Family Watch International, Mrs. Iman Sandra Pertex from Islamic Relief Worldwide and Mr. Monzer Al Chouk from Islamic Fiqh Academy.
2. The names of the experts/members of IPHRC who attended the meeting are given below:
  - i. Amb. Ilham Ibrahim Mohamed AHMED (Chairperson)
  - ii. Mr. Med S.K. KAGGWA
  - iii. Amb. Abdul WAHAB
  - iv. Amb. Mostafa ALAEI
  - v. Dr. Oumar ABOU ABBA
  - vi. Dr. Saleh Bin Mohamed AL-KHATLAN
  - vii. Dr. Ergin Ergul
  - viii. Mrs. Siti Ruhaini DZUHAYATIN
  - ix. Dr. Mohammad Mamduh Madhat AL-ACKER
  - x. Dr. Saeed Mohammad Abdullah Amir ALGHAFLI
  - xi. Dr. Rashid bin Hamed bin Humaid AL BALUSHI
  - xii. Mr. Adama NANA
  - xiii. Mr. Mahamad Al-Bachir IBRAHIM
  - xiv. Mr. Mohammed RAISSOUNI
  - xv. Mr. Mohammed Lamin TIMBO
  - xvi. Mr. Thiam ALHOUSSEINE
  - xvii. Mrs. Asila WARDAK
  - xviii. Dr. Raihanah Binti ABDULLAH (Absent with apology)
3. The Session started with the recitation of verses from The Holy Quran.

4. Ambassador Ilham Ibrahim welcomed and introduced the new commissioners Dr. Rashid bin Hamed bin Humaid Al Balushi (Oman), Dr. Saeed Mohammad Abdullah Amir Alghafli (UAE), Mr. Adama Nana (Burkina Faso) and Mr. Thiam Alhousseine (Guinea) to the Commission and wished them success in their new positions.
5. During the five day session, the Commission had in-depth discussions on all items on its agenda including human rights violations in Occupied Palestinian Territories; civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights in OIC Member States; specific mandates given to it by the Council of Foreign Ministers as well as procedural issues relating to its working methods and establishment of a mechanism for interaction with NGOs and broader civil society. The first two days of the session were kept for closed meetings, during which each working group held focused discussion on their specific mandates. Details of these meetings are covered under relevant headings and agenda items in this report.
6. The Commission also received briefings on status of drafts on Methods of work of IPHRC and decision on the proposed framework for interaction with civil society including NGOs. Office of the Special Envoy of OIC for the Jammu and Kashmir dispute also provided briefing on the human rights situation in the Indian-Occupied Kashmir. Additionally the Commission deliberated on its future plan of activities including list of studies / reports to be prepared as well as response to the specific requests from the OIC Secretary General.
7. Mr. Marghoob Butt, Executive Director of IPHRC Secretariat, also provided a briefing on the Istanbul Process, which is an informal mechanism for the full and effective implementation of UNHRC Res 16/18. He also gave details of the preparations for the upcoming 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Process, which is to be hosted by the OIC in Jeddah on 3-4 June 2015 and conveyed invitation of the OIC Secretary General to the IPHRC to attend the meeting.
8. Mr. Butt also provided information on the positive progress vis-à-vis finding the new and separate building for IPHRC headquarters and preparations for presenting a separate IPHRC budget to the next meeting of OIC Permanent Finance Committee. Additionally, the Commissioners were briefed on development of IPHRC website, related information brochure and its new logo. The Commission members made some suggestions, which were noted for compliance.

## ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND PROGRAMME OF WORK

9. The Commission adopted the Agenda and Program of Work (**Annex-A**) of its 7<sup>th</sup> Session, in the first meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2015 under its new chairperson Ambassador Ilham Ibrahim. The Agenda was based on priority areas identified in previous IPHRC sessions, as well as mandates given to the Commission by the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM).
10. The Commission decided to adopt "*Freedom of Expression and Hate Speech*" as the theme for the 8<sup>th</sup> IPHRC Session. IPHRC further decided that its 2015 Annual Workshop would be dedicated to the subject of "Human Rights Education", which will be held on 12-13 October 2015 in Jakarta, Indonesia.
11. Based on their preference, the Commission assigned its new members to various Working Groups as per following: (i) Mr. Adama NANA to WGs on Right to Development and Women and Child Rights (ii) Dr. BALUSHI to WGs on Islamophobia and Right to Development (iii) Dr. Saeed ALGHAFI to WG on Women and Child Rights (iv) Mr. Thiam AHOUSSEINE to WG on Right to Development

## OPENING SESSION

12. The formal inauguration of the Session was held on 21 April 2015.
13. Ambassador Ilham Ahmed, Chairperson of IPHRC, in her opening remarks paid tribute to the contribution of the outgoing Chairman Mr. Mohamed Kawu Ibrahim in furthering the interests of IPHRC. She also provided an overview of the activities carried out by the Commission in 2014 as well as dwelt on the progress made by IPHRC on various mandates given to it by the CFM. To that end, she expressed thanks for the positive response received from Member States on the IPHRC's Workshop on "Negative impact of economic and financial sanctions on the enjoyment of human rights by the people of affected countries" held in Tehran last year as well as holding of the thematic debate on "Combating extremism and intolerance in Islam" during the 6<sup>th</sup> IPHRC Session. Outcome documents of both these events contained important recommendations for different stakeholders and were widely appreciated as useful inputs for consideration of OIC Member States.
14. The Chair expressed serious concerns over the growing Islamophobic and xenophobic hostilities faced by the Muslim minorities in the West in the aftermath of the 'Charlie

Hebdo' incident. She urged the Commission to initiate a debate with a view to define parameters of freedom of speech to protect and preserve the dignity and respect of Muslim minorities and communities. In this regards, she endorsed the view of other members that the subject of "*Freedom of Expression and Hate Speech*" would be the theme for the eighth session of IPHRC.

15. On behalf of the Commission, IPHRC Chair condemned the inhuman killings of over 100 students in Garissa University, Kenya by supposedly Al-Shahab militants as well as hundreds of innocent civilians at the hands of Daash/ISIL in various countries of Middle East and Africa. She expressed solidarity with the victims of these terrorist acts, and reiterated that such extremist ideologies, radicalism, intolerance and terrorism have nothing to do with Islam, which is a religion of peace and promotes moderation and balance in its teachings.
16. The Chair expressed strong concern on the plight of migrants from Africa to Europe, in particular recent reports of their drowning before they arrived at European at shores. She called upon relevant UN and European authorities to take all possible measures to address the subject in a comprehensive manner including the need to provide all possible assistance in accordance with the established international human rights law and humanitarian norms and standards. She further expressed its concern on the continued plight of the abducted girls by Boko Haram and urged relevant authorities to take all possible actions to locate and liberate the kidnapped girls, on priority.
17. H.E. Iyad Ameen Madani, Secretary General of the OIC, in his remarks, conveyed his appreciation on the useful activities carried out by the IPHRC in line with its aims and objectives. Stressing the importance of the independence of the Commission's work, including intellectual independence in discussions and decision-making, Mr. Madani expressed the full moral, logistical and financial support of the General Secretariat for the IPHRC's work. He added that the focus of IPHRC should not only be helping Member States in crafting, devising and implementing appropriate policies consistent with the fundamental human rights but also to bridge the growing divide and misperception about the incompatibility between Islam and human rights.
18. The Secretary General reminded the Commission about the need to create a yardstick, which would enable each Member State to compare and calibrate its own laws and practices with the Islamic human rights model. In this regards, he suggested that the Commission must review the existing OIC human rights instruments vis-à-vis universal human rights norms and instruments and accordingly propose suggestions for

improvements and updating, where required. He reminded the Commission that one of its tasks were to defend Islamic values and present a true image of this peaceful religion.

### **THEMATIC DISCUSSION: "PROTECTION OF FAMILY VALUES"**

19. The theme for the 7<sup>th</sup> IPHRC Session was "*Protection of Family Values*". Besides Commission Members, the debate was attended by OIC Secretary General and a number of international experts who dwelt on the subject from various aspects including challenges faced both by the institution of family and its members in different contexts.
20. Amb Ilham opened the debate with a brief introduction of the subject, its importance in the context of promoting and protecting the rights of children as well as for progressive development of societies. Reaffirming the importance of family as the natural and fundamental unit of society, she explained the on-going challenges related to confusing the definition of family and hoped that the discussion would lead to a substantive outcome on the theme of "*Protection of Family Values*" at this session.
21. In his remarks the OIC Secretary General welcomed the thematic focus of the session, as a subject of utmost importance to the OIC, which must be protected and promoted in accordance with the Islamic values and teachings that were also in line with the universal human rights standards. He recommended holding a special conference of the OIC on the subject that could look into related definitions as well as measures needed to address various challenges by this fundamental unit of society and its members in different contexts and situations. He welcomed participation of Islamic Fiqh Academy in the debate and urged to build bridges of communication between the two institutions with a view to incorporating Islamic perspective on the interrelated subjects and projecting unified views and positions. He hoped that the Commission would help bring a paradigm shift within the OIC in the way universal rights and freedoms flow together with Islamic values to offer a coherent system aimed at full enjoyment of all human rights.
22. Ambassador Zamir Akram, Coordinator of the OIC Group in Geneva, gave a detailed briefing on the way the subject of family was discussed in the United Nations including the new forms and challenges posed to the definition of traditional family such as LGBT couples. According to him, assertions on LGBT were an attempt to confuse our understanding of the concept of family. He reminded that family is the nucleus of society and a sacred institution, which is revered and must be protected. He dilated

upon OIC's position on definition of family and approaches adopted by it to counter Western inspired understanding. He also emphasized that OIC position at international level should be unanimous and must be based on legal arguments. To that end, he suggested close cooperation and collaboration with important countries like Russian Federation and China etc., which share OIC's views and understanding on the subject.

23. Mr. Monzer Al Chouk, representative of Islamic Fiqh Academy gave Islamic perspective of family and its importance in progress and prosperity of a healthy society. He said the Islamic concept of family is based on rights and responsibilities which are vital to maintain order in the society. He reaffirmed that the fundamental definition of the family remains unchanged as a long-term consensual relationship between a man and a woman who are bound by the reciprocal rights and responsibilities enshrined in Islamic teachings. He condemned the growing trend of confusing the definition of family with new and controversial notions of LGBT families based on sexual orientation that were not only un-Islamic but immoral and anarchical.
24. Ms. Sharon Slater from Family Watch International, acknowledged that the institution of family was under assault more than ever before both in different societies as well as United Nations. Western countries were forcing their societal norms on developing countries through Media, development assistance as well as were trying to change well established UN norms on the subject. She suggested that (i) OIC Member States should effectively employ UN consensus language on the family to influence family related policies, (ii) OIC to insist that the family be recognized as one of the contributing factors for development in the UN Sustainable Development Goals (iii) OIC to insist on defining the term 'gender' in all UN documents as "male and female" only, (iv) OIC should demand that UN entities (committees, rapporteurs, agencies) do not overstep their mandates to promote sexual rights, (v) Islamic NGOs may be asked to lobby in UN, (vi) Summits and conferences may be held on the subject to highlight Islamic point of view and (vii) training may be provided to politicians, civil servants and teachers on these subject in order to effectively counter anti-family or sexual rights agenda.
25. Ms. Iman Sandra Pertek from Islamic Relief World Wide, briefed on the protection of rights of vulnerable segments in humanitarian and development contexts especially during and after conflict situations. She opined that it is the duty of the States to implement human rights based family policies and legislations that promote protection of family in crisis situations. She recommended that in order to protect the vulnerable sections like women and young girls, it is imperative that multi sector humanitarian responses should include protection against violence programs also.

26. The Commission Members also rendered their opinion and recommendations on the subject, which are summarised as below:

- i. Called upon all stakeholders, including UN mechanisms, NGOs and national human rights institutions to put family at the core of their agendas as well as to avoid misconceptions and controversies which contradict universal family values.
- ii. Expressed strong concerns on the contents of a number of publications issued by various UN bodies such as UNICEF, WHO and UNFPA that elaborate on the so-called notion of sexual orientation and comprehensive sexuality education for children as disturbing and morally unacceptable to various religious values as well as potentially harmful to the very institution of family. It urged these UN bodies to refrain from using such advocacy material that has not been approved or adopted by consensus, thus undermining the spirit of the universally accepted human rights values, norms and instruments.
- iii. Called upon all Member States to support the OIC positions and resolutions on the family issue, including family values and protection of the family.
- iv. Underlined the importance of undertaking advocacy activities at relevant forums, including working with pro-family NGOs for holding conferences and seminars with the view to promoting and advancing family values. In this context, CFM and the OIC Social and Family Department were asked to organize broad-based international conferences in collaboration with like-minded geographical groups, institutions of civil societies, particularly NGOs and NHRIs in the OIC Member States.
- v. Recognized and stressed the urgent need to finding ways and means to effectively protect the family and family integration in conflict and post-conflict situations as well as other emergencies and situations such as migrant and refugee families. To that end, it urged OIC Member States to ensure provision of basic human rights and legal protection to these affected families in particular the right to education and health.

27. Following the panellists and Commissioners, Member and Observer States took the floor and deliberated on the importance of the family and the steps needed to strengthen this fundamental unit of society. Some of the key messages highlighted during their interventions are given below :

- Need to uphold, protect, preserve and promote family values, which are considered as crucial in developing progressive, peaceful and tolerant societies that are at peace within and without.
- States' unambiguous obligation under international human rights law to promote and provide support to the institution of family in order to ensure that it could undertake its responsibilities.
- All attempts to blur the definition of family through western inspired concepts should be discouraged through unified action and developing counter narratives at UN and other multilateral forums.
- Urged sharing of legislative experiences and policy developments in Member States on pro-family issues with a view to allow each member of the family to develop and utilize their potential to the fullest.
- Importance of engaging media to promote OIC's point of view and to organize workshops, seminars and conferences on this subject.
- Provision of assistance to families in vulnerable situations, such as single parent families, poor families with elderly members, families affected by child abuse and domestic violence, as well as those in conflict and post conflict areas.

28. A separate communiqué (Annex-F) was issued that summarizes the discussion during this thematic debate and views of IPHRC on the subject.

## **WORKING METHODS OF THE COMMISSION**

29. Chairperson Amb. Ilham Ahmed and Amb. Abdul Wahab gave a briefing about the status of the draft on Methods of Work of IPHRC and its working groups. After some discussion and suggestions from the Commission Members, a small group of commissioners namely Amb Ilham, Amb Abdul Wahab, Prof. Saleh and Amb Alaei were tasked to finalize the document and circulate it to all Commissioners for final views, if any. It was further decided that unless there is an objection, the draft would be considered adopted two weeks after its circulation.

## **PENDING MANDATES**

30. The Commission also discussed actions on its pending mandates from the CFM and decided/recommended the following:

- i. On the mandate to write a comprehensive report on "Combating Islamophobia and Eliminating Hatred and Prejudice against Islam", the Commission welcomed

the draft report prepared by Dr. Saleh, which was being discussed by the three member Working group made for the purpose (Dr. Saleh, Amb. Abdul Wahab and Amb. Ilham). Following their review the draft will be translated and shared with all Commission members for views and inputs for finalization as well as adoption during the next meeting of the Commission.

- ii. As for the upcoming mandate of reviewing the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam, the Commission established another small working committee comprising of Dr. Ergin Ergul, Amb. Abdul Wahab, Dr. Saleh and Dr. Balushi to start the initial work. It was decided that the bureau will also stay closely engaged on the subject.
- iii. The Commission also took the decision to write a number of other thematic reports and studies on the subjects of contemporary importance to the OIC within the field of human rights. Details of these studies/reports are given below:
  - a) Rights of Minorities in Islam: Mr. Raissouni
  - b) Promotion and protection of human rights while countering terrorism: Mr. Lamin Timbo and Amb. Alaei
  - c) Human Rights and cultural diversity: Amb. Mostafa Alaei
  - d) Sexual Orientation and Gender identity: Dr. Ruhaini, Dr. Al-Acker and Dr. Abbou Abba
  - e) Rights of inheritance in Islam: Dr. Balushi and Mahamad Al-Bachir

#### **STANDING MECHANISM ON HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN THE INDIAN OCCUPIED KASHMIR**

31. The Commission received a briefing on the human rights situation in the Indian Occupied Kashmir by Amb Yahya Lawal on behalf of the OIC Secretary General's Special Envoy for Jammu and Kashmir dispute (who was away on an official visit). Amb. Lawal provided the Commission with a comprehensive background information of the dispute and unrelenting human rights violations committed by Indian Security forces against the Muslim population of Indian occupied Kashmir. He underscored the importance of resolving the issue at the earliest as it had been one of the oldest unresolved disputes on the agenda of United Nations since 1948.

32. Amb. Lawal also briefed the Commission about the OIC activities on the subject including humanitarian aid extended to the Kashmiri people, and the visit of the OIC delegation along with IDB, ISF and ICAHD Departments in November 2013. He informed that the next OIC visit will be led by Special Envoy on Jammu and Kashmir, Ambassador Abdullah Alim the Assistant Secretary General of OIC for Political Affairs. He also

indicated the presence of OIC Contact Group on Jammu and Kashmir, which regularly meets at the sidelines of OIC Summits and CFMs and discusses the issue.

33. The Commission thanked Ambassador Lawal for his briefing on the human rights situation in Indian occupied Kashmir and requested the OIC General Secretariat to continue to provide the Commissioners with full information related to the situation in Kashmir. The Commission further requested to include some Commissioners into the list of next OIC delegation visiting Kashmir. The Commission decided that its Standing Mechanism on monitoring the human rights situation in Indian Occupied Kashmir (IoK) will closely collaborate with the OIC General Secretariat on the subject and tasked Amb. Abdul Wahab to draft the operating methods/modalities of this Mechanism, with a view to finalizing it during the next IPHRC Session.
34. The Commission also urged the OIC Member States to persuade and pressurize Indian authorities to cooperate with OIC and international community in addressing the violations of human rights of the people of IoK. It was also agreed that the human rights organizations and NGO's who have access to Kashmir should be encouraged to help ameliorate the situation of Muslims in Kashmir.

#### **WORKING GROUPS DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

35. On 20th April, the Commission held closed meetings of its four Working Groups (WG). These working groups delved in detail on their mandated activities; measured progress on the decisions taken in the past and discussed future course of action to be taken both within the working group format as well as by the Commission as a whole. Outcomes of the discussion and decisions taken during these meetings were conveyed to the Member States by respective WG Coordinators on 21 April 2015. Details of these WG meetings are given below.

#### **HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN PALESTINE AND OTHER OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES**

36. The closed discussion of the WG was held under the Chairmanship of Commissioner Mohammed Lamin Timbo. The Commission received briefings from Amb. Samir Bakr, Assistant Secretary General of the Al-Quds Department, Commissioner Dr. Mohammad Mamduh Madhat AL-ACKER, and representative of Palestine in Jeddah on the subject. These briefings provided comprehensive overview of the situation in Palestine as well as the continuing human rights violations in the occupied Palestinian territories that inter-alia include Israeli blockade and constant administrative embargoes and harassment of

Palestinian population including arbitrary detentions and torture. It was informed that, despite international condemnation, there is no letting up in the Israeli illegal settlement activities.

37. Amb Samir Bakr briefed the Commission on the Secretary General's visit to Al-Aqsa and his meeting with the Palestinian leaders earlier this year. He apprised that the Secretary General had called upon the international community, particularly the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to put pressure on Israel, to compel it to halt all settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), including the occupied city of Al-Quds.
38. The Commission was further informed that pursuant to the Plan of Action adopted by the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers on the cause of Palestine, the Secretary General, in coordination with Al Quds Committee, had established a Ministerial Contact Group on Palestine which recently paid visits to Russia, Norway and China to persuade and expedite major countries to recognize Palestine as an independent State. The Commission was also apprised about the plans to organize round table meetings in collaboration with UN in Hague and Geneva to raise awareness about Israeli atrocities from human rights perspective.
39. The OIC humanitarian Mission to Gaza conducted in Feb 2015 identified three main issues that require urgent attention from humanitarian perspective namely: a) reconstruction of houses, b) rebuilding of schools, and c) rehabilitation of health services. It was mentioned that there have been commitments of 1.9 billion dollars from a number of OIC countries. The Commission welcomed the sturdy support by OIC Member States and urged further assistance both by the OIC Member States and international community for reconstruction of shelters, schools and hospitals, on priority.
40. With regards to the intended visit to Palestine by the IPHRC, Amb Samir hoped that despite obvious difficulties vis-à-vis arranging visas for the Commission members, the visit could soon be materialized. At its end, the WG emphasized its determination to undertake the trip, both for the purpose of giving moral support to Palestinians, as well as to practically observe areas in which the Commission would be able to mobilize assistance through Member-States, and their financial institutions, especially Islamic Development Bank.

41. Commissioner, Dr. Mohammed Acker in his intervention gave information about the human rights violations and humanitarian conditions in Gaza after the Israeli blockade. The Commission was informed that unless the Gaza-Siege ends, the ongoing construction projects would not make much progress, as more attacks would be launched by Israel on different pretexts. Furthermore, the fundamental human rights such as liberty, peaceful gathering, and freedom of expression etc. have been repeatedly violated and restricted. He, however, pointed towards two recent good developments, which include emergence of a vibrant and resilient civil society in Palestine, which is confronting the occupation on physical, intellectual and moral levels. Secondly, the establishment of an independent investigation committee by the UN Human Rights Council to probe the Israeli human rights violations in occupied Gaza.
42. The Commission reiterated its grave concerns against the continuing illegitimate Israeli practice of detaining Palestinian citizens without due process, on-going and expanding settlement activities, continued blockade of Gaza strip, holding Palestinian Authority from collecting its legitimate revenues, restrictions on freedom of movement of Palestinians as well as excavation and confiscation of land and property in surrounding areas of Al-Aqsa mosque. It urged Palestine to file cases against Israeli violations of their human rights in relevant international courts to seek justice. It also urged the international community to play its due role in making requisite efforts to pave the way for the long awaited just and peaceful settlement of this dispute that would allow Palestinians to have their own independent, viable and contiguous State with East Jerusalem as its capital.
43. The WG condemned the Israeli targeting of the Al-Aqsa mosque, and urged the OIC States to take proactive measures to stop Israel from implementing its well-known plans on the Al-Aqsa Mosque. It also called on the OIC States to boycott and divest companies and corporations, which are taking part in Israeli settlements in the OPT.
44. The Commission noted that the plight of the Palestinians under administrative detention by Israel had worsened with hundreds picked up after the Gaza siege. To that end, the Commission urged the international community to look into these gross violations of fundamental rights of Palestinians by Israel and urged OIC States to fully support the Commission of Inquiry established by the UNHRC in July 2014.
45. Additionally, the Working Group:

- a) Recommended the OIC to participate in international meetings and seminars that address the legal aspects of the Israeli occupation policies to strengthen legitimacy of the right of Palestinian statehood;
- b) Welcomed the establishment of independent fact-finding mission by UN HRC to investigate arbitrary abuses, violations and crimes perpetrated by Israel against Palestinians and urged all Member States to cooperate with it.
- c) Asked Palestinians to file complaints against Israel in International Criminal Court on the principle of universal jurisdiction to criminalize administrative detention and to hold the Israel accountable for their crimes.
- d) Organize events aimed at highlighting the plight of Palestinians at the international level especially during the September Session of Human Rights Council in Geneva to publicize the information and to strengthen the position of OIC group.

## **CIVIL, POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS IN OIC MEMBER STATES**

### **Working Group on Human Rights of Women and the Child**

46. The Working Groups on Human Rights of Women and the Child as well as Right to Development also held a comprehensive meeting under Commission's permanent agenda item on "Civil, Political, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in OIC Member States". The meeting was chaired by Dr. Siti Ruhaini.
47. The Working Group on Women and Child Rights was given a briefing by Dr. Fadila Grine, Director of Family Affairs Department of the OIC who informed about the initiatives and programs carried out by the department to promote and protect the rights of women, children, youth, elderly and others. She pointed out that the department is trying to evaluate all of its meetings and conferences to improve its efficiency and effectiveness. While informing Commissioners on the OIC's involvement in the 59th session of Commission on the Status of Women in UN New York. Dr. Grine expressed readiness of her department to work with the IPHRC on the rights of women, children and family. She sought Commission's support to urge Member States to sign and ratify the statute of the OIC Women Development Organization.
48. The Working Group delved in detail on issues related to gender equality, violence against women and children. In order to better define a clear Islamic perspective on these issues, the Commission decided that the Working Group on human rights of women and children will conduct studies and research on topics such as gender equality, violence against women and children, child-marriage, right of inheritance,

protection of family, controversial notions of sexual orientation/LGBT and abortion with the assistance of, and in close cooperation with relevant entities and mechanisms such as Fiqh Academy, ISESCO, SESRIC and IDB. The Commission hoped that these studies would provide a better explanation of the Islamic views on these subjects, while ensuring full respect to the rights of women and children in line with existing international human rights standards. The Commission also decided to publish a booklet on Women and Child rights, in cooperation with relevant scholars and academics, with the objective of putting forward IPHRC's views on the subject.

49. The Commission welcomed the skype briefing given by Commissioner Dr. Raihana about the decision of the Government of Malaysia to host a conference on the subject of implementation of OIC Plan of Action on Advancement of Women in 2015 and urged Member States to take all steps necessary to realize the recommendations made in the Outcome document of the 5th Ministerial meeting of OIC on Role of Women in Advancement of OIC States, held in Baku, Azerbaijan in November 2014. It also called upon Member States to ratify the statute of OIC Women Development Organization, to be based in Cairo, enabling it to start its meaningful work.

50. The WG also called upon Member States to work closely with the UN Women and to participate in the forthcoming International Women Summit to be held in Malaysia in October/Nov 2015. The WG also recommended organizing side events at the UN for awareness and recognition of IPHRC's point of view.

## **CIVIL, POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS IN OIC MEMBER STATES**

### **Working Group on the Right to Development**

51. The Working Group on Right to Development met under the Chairmanship of Commissioner Amb. Mostafa Alaei and held comprehensive discussions on various aspects related to its mandate, in particular the outcome of the International Seminar on the subject of *"negative impact of sanctions on the full enjoyment of human rights by the people of affected countries"*, held in Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran on 15-16 December 2014. While discussing various aspects of this Seminar, the WG observed that comprehensive sanctions and interruption of international economic, trade and financial relations for a protracted period of time, particularly when not assessed and monitored, would shrink national income, which in turn leads to the violations of human

rights of the people of affected countries, including their right to life, food, health, education and development.

52. The Commission expressed its full support to the Human Rights Council in its efforts to condemn and reject unilateral coercive measures, including the recent creation of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur through Res 27/21 on the subject, which is expected to bring more accountability within the UN system on the matters related to the implementation of sanctions.
53. The Commission reiterated its recommendation to the OIC General Secretariat to establish a monitoring mechanism within the OIC General Secretariat on sanctions; and decided to forge close collaboration with the UN Human Rights Council on this subject, including structured interaction with Special Rapporteur as well as disseminating and publicizing OIC position on sanctions by convening side events.
54. During the meeting of the WG, Mr. Kamran Akhtar, Director General of Science and Technology of the OIC General Secretariat also made a presentation on the importance of scientific and technological collaboration among the Member States for sustainable socio economic development. He shared results of statistical analysis carried out by his department in the areas of health, maternity, child issues, vaccines, water issues, food security, lack of storage and preservation, climate change etc. Mr. Kamran stressed that restrictions on transfer of technologies and limiting cooperation in health sector should be considered as an infringement to human rights. He recommended that health and education issues should be on the top priority of Member States to enable their citizens get fairer and equitable access to basic amenities of life.

#### **HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATIONS AND ISSUES ON OIC AGENDA/MANDATES FROM CFM**

55. The Working Group under the chairmanship of Dr. Saleh Bin Mohamed AlKhatlan held a detailed meeting under Commission's permanent agenda item on "Human Rights Situations and Issues on the OIC Agenda", and discussed issues related to combating Islamophobia, Human Rights situation of the Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar and situation of Muslims in Central African Republic.

#### **Combating Islamophobia and Incitement to Hatred and Violence**

56. The Working Group received briefing from Mr. Abdulla Manafi Mutualo, the Secretary of OIC Islamophobia Observatory, on the activities of the Observatory and shared salient

points of the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Report on Islamophobia, which will be presented to the 42<sup>nd</sup> CFM in Kuwait in May 2015. The Commission was also informed about the initiatives taken by some of the European governments in combating incitement to hatred based on religion or belief, which included French Government's 100-million-euro program to combat anti-Semitism and Islamophobia ( a three-year program aimed at increasing penalties for hate crimes and those deemed racist in nature) and Swedish Government's proposed new national strategy to counter the growing prejudice against Islam in the country. The Commission also recommended a thorough evaluation of the OIC Islamophobia Observatory in order to make it more effective in countering this dangerous and ever growing phenomenon.

57. Mr. Mutualo further emphasized that political will and a coherent strategy was needed for combating Islamophobia. Based on the briefing given and follow up discussion in the Working Group, a broad lay out / key points of such a strategy were highlighted as following:

- a. Raise global awareness of Islam's basic tenets of moderation and modernization and combat the phenomenon of Islamophobia comprehensively and collectively in coordination and cooperation among the Member States, the international community and the UN Human Rights mechanisms;
- b. Pursue vigorous diplomatic efforts to sensitize the international community on the dangerous implications of this phenomenon in the regional as well as the global context;
- c. Conduct public diplomacy with a view to neutralize the systematic campaign against Islam and Muslims by extremists, in particular in Western societies;
- d. Continue to monitor Islamophobia acts, events, publications and utterances on a daily basis with a view to removing misperceptions by issuing rejoinders and rebuttals and calling on the governments and other authorities concerned to take appropriate remedial measures
- e. Engage with the Western governments, OIC institutions, International Organizations, and Muslims communities with a view to creating synergies towards combating Islamophobia in a coordinated and effective manner.

58. The WG benefited from a presentation by Ambassador Zamir Akram, who dwelt at the complex nature of Islamophobia, which according to him was considered as the new form of racism based on religion. He opined that Islamophobia was product of centuries of misrepresentation and misperception of Islam fuelled by current political, economic and social conditions in Western countries. While providing the history of the UNHRC

resolution 16/18, he highlighted its importance in combating the malaise of incitement to hatred and discrimination based on religion in a consensual manner. To that end he emphasized the importance of maintaining consensus on this important resolution as well as the need to pursue full and effective implementation of its Action Plan. The Commissioners thanked Amb Akram for his comprehensive briefing and agreed to have regular consultations with the OIC Groups in Geneva and New York on issues of mutual importance with a view to presenting comprehensive OIC views and positions on these issues.

59. The Chair of the Working Group Dr. Saleh Bin Mohamed AL-KHATLAN informed the Commissioners that as mandated by the CFM, the first draft of Commission's report on Islamophobia was almost ready. He added that the said report focuses on several dimensions of the complex phenomena of islamophobia such as: definition of Islamophobia, its different root causes, a brief history on the UN efforts to combat discrimination based on religion or belief, the role of the OIC, resolution 16/18 and Istanbul Process, the main points of contentions between Muslims and the West on the issue of Islamophobia and incitement against Islam and Muslims, and finally a list of recommendations for future action. Keeping in view, the complexity and vastness of the subject it was decided that the report should only focus on those aspects that are directly linked to the Commission's mandate. The report is expected to be adopted by the next IPHRC session in order that can be presented to the next OIC CFM. At the same time, the Commission reiterated its call on the OIC General Secretariat to conduct a comprehensive study of national legislations on hate speech in Western countries that was requested by the 12th Summit to, among other things, help in constructing model of a legal framework to criminalize hate speech against all religions and minorities.
60. The Commission unequivocally condemned the recent spate of hateful speech against Muslims and denigration of Islamic religious symbols and personalities under the garb of freedom of expression such as incidents of Charlie Hebdo and Texas exhibition to draw Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) caricatures. It renewed the call for combating denigration and negative religious stereotyping as well as proscribing advocacy to religious hatred that leads to incitement to discrimination and imminent violence. To that end, it welcomed the upcoming 5th meeting of Istanbul Process (3-4 June 2015 in Jeddah) and urged all stakeholders to focus on the ways to ensure the full and effective implementation of the Action Plan contained in Res 16/18. It also discussed its own participation in the meeting.

## MEMBER STATES INCLUDING MYANMAR AND CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

### Situation of Rohingya Muslims

61. The WG received briefing on Myanmar from Dr. Hassen Abedin, Head of the OIC Muslim Minorities Department. He provided an update on the humanitarian situation of Rohingya Muslim population in Myanmar and elaborated on the steps taken by the OIC to protect and preserve their human rights. According to him, suffering of the Rohingyas was worsening as Myanmar government continues to deny the existence of a separate Rohingya identity and argues that they were Bengalis. Myanmar further denied that Rohingya Muslims have been subjected to systemic violations and claimed that violations, if exist, are result of inter-communal conflict. The contest for election scheduled for later this year has exasperated the plight of the Rohingya Muslims as their identity cards have been withdrawn to prevent them from participation in the election. This move will complicate their already difficult situation and deprive them from the enjoyment of basic rights. It was told that the Myanmar government was also not cooperating in disbursement of aid from OIC member states.
62. Dr. Abedin informed that Mr. Hamid Albar, the Special Envoy of the OIC Secretary General for Myanmar (former Foreign Minister of Malaysia), had been active on different levels to alleviate the suffering of the Rohingya Muslims. His visits to Myanmar including to the Rakhine State had been helpful in establishing the contact and assess the gravity of the situation on ground. Besides meeting officials from Myanmar, Mr. Albar also held meetings with officials from South East Asian countries concerned with the issue for better projection of the Rohingya situation. He also supervised a regional symposium on religious intolerance in Malaysia this year as a way of exerting pressure on the Myanmar government.
63. The discussion within the WG emphasised the need to continue both formal and informal engagement with officials in Myanmar to build trust. The Commission decided to invite Dr. Hamid Albar to participate in its eighth session to discuss ways for joint action to address this issue. The WG also discussed the possibility of working a way out with the Special Envoy in arranging the pending visit of IPHRC to Myanmar. Proposals were also made to conduct a research study to prove the legitimacy of residency claim of the Rohingya population and to organize a roundtable conference in the region under the auspices of IPHRC and OIC Special Envoy.

64. Simultaneously, it was suggested that humanitarian support both material and diplomatic should be provided to the Rohingya Muslims to mitigate their human sufferings. In this regards, the role of NGOs and intergovernmental bodies like EU and other western governments was described as significant. The Commission also called upon Myanmar authorities to ensure protection of the right to life and wellbeing of its Rohingya population; bring to justice those responsible for inciting hatred and violence as well as take steps to ensure non-discrimination on any grounds in laws and practice including denial of citizenship to Rohingya Muslims.

#### **Situation in the Central African Republic (CAR)**

65. The Working Group received a briefing on the ongoing situation of Muslims in Central African Republic by Ambassador Yahya Lawal from the Political Affairs Department of the OIC General Secretariat. According to him, the situation is improving yet it remains fragile and unpredictable where more than half a million people had been forced to take refuge in neighbouring countries, mainly to Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo and Cameroon.

66. Ambassador Lawal conveyed that in line with the last CFM Resolution on the subject, the OIC has been playing an active role in all activities aimed at creating and building peace in CAR, especially through national reconciliation. He updated the WG on various activities and efforts undertaken by the OIC Secretary General's Special Envoy on CAR, Dr. Cheikh Tidiane Gadio (former Foreign Minister of Senegal). He also informed the Commission that in line with the decisions taken by the OIC Executive Committee Meeting at ministerial level that was held in Jeddah **in February 2014**, a series of measures have been taken by the OIC to help normalize the situation in CAR. Also, it was informed that with regards to the CFM mandate, the Commission's delegation proceeding to Banjul will hold in-depth exchange of views with the African Commission on Human and People's Rights for joint action on this issue as well as other matters of mutual importance.

67. He further informed that recently a senior level CAR delegation visited the OIC to discuss ways and means to seek support during the transitional period. The OIC's position was to support and contribute to the national reconciliation process in CAR, which includes despatching humanitarian aid and relief supplies to alleviate the situation. Ambassador Lawal proposed that the Commission may consider undertaking another field visit to CAR to have a clearer picture of ongoing human rights situation in the country. Amb Lawal also consulted the Commission on the proposal for a general amnesty, which had been proposed as part of the national reconciliation efforts.

However, it was argued that such amnesty should be carefully evaluated from a moral and human rights perspective.

68. The WG thanked Ambassador Lawal for the update on the situation in CAR and urged OIC Member States to follow up on the recommendations made in the IPHRC report on CAR.

## **CLOSING SESSION**

69. In her concluding remarks, IPHRC Chairperson thanked Member States for their keen interest in the work of the Commission as well as their sustained support for its activities. She reaffirmed Commission's strong commitment to its aims and objectives as well as expressed its resolve to fulfilling various responsibilities entrusted by Member States in the area of promoting human rights. Amb Ilham also expressed gratitude to the OIC Secretary General for his personal interest in the work of the Commission as well as for providing strong support for the smooth functioning of the Commission. Additionally, the Chairperson shared with Member States the future plans and projects that the Commission intends to deliberate upon, such as strengthening research and writing reports / position papers on the right of inheritance in Islam; rights of minorities in Islam; Combating extremism; promoting/upholding human rights while combating terrorism; importance of cultural and religious diversity while promoting human rights; freedom of expression and hate speech; issue of sexual orientation as well as the need to reviewing the existing OIC human rights instruments.
70. She reiterated Commission's request to the Member States to provide information on their human rights legislation as well as IPHRC's offer to provide technical assistance in any of the relevant fields. Amb Ilham also requested the IPHRC Secretariat to convey all finalized documents and session reports to the Member States for their information. In order to raise public awareness on activities conducted by IPHRC, the Commission also requested the Secretariat to post selected documents at the IPHRC website.
71. The Commission decided to address the theme of "Freedom of expression and Hate speech" during its 8th Session. IPHRC further decided that its Annual Workshop to be held in October in Jakarta will be dedicated to the subject of Human Rights Education.

72. The Commission expressed its sincere thanks and appreciation to the host country, the government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and Custodian of Two Holy Mosques for their continued support and commitment to the aims, objectives and activities of IPHRC.
73. At the end of the Session the Commission issued three Statements namely a) Detailed Communique outlining the summary of the Session proceedings b) Press Statement on the theme of the Session “Protection of Family Values” c) Press Statement condemning the drowning of African emigrants to Europe in the Mediterranean Sea, which are attached as Annexures E, F, and G respectively.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **ANNEX-A**



### **Agenda**

**7<sup>th</sup> Session of the OIC Independent Permanent  
Human Rights Commission (IPHRC)  
Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia  
19 – 23 April, 2015**

-----

**Item 1: Adoption of the Agenda and Program of Work**

**Item 2: Human Rights Situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories**

**Item 3: Civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights in OIC Member States**

- Sub item a: Human Rights of Women
- Sub item b: Rights of the Child
- Sub item c: Right to Development
- Sub item d: Human rights education

**Item 4: Human Rights situations and issues on the OIC Agenda / mandates from CFM**

- Sub item a: Combating Islamophobia and incitement to hatred and violence
- Sub item b: Situation in the OIC Member States
- Sub item c: Human rights situation of Muslim minorities and communities in non-member States including Myanmar and Central African Republic
- Sub item d: Standing mechanism for monitoring the human rights situation in the Indian-occupied Kashmir

**Item 5: Report of the Session and Provisional Agenda for next Session**

**Item 6: Any other business**

- Sub item a: Finalization of Methods of Work of IPHRC and its working groups
- Sub item b: Finalization of IPHRC logo and updating of website
- Sub item c: Establishing contact and framework agreement for interaction with Civil Society including NGOs
- Sub item d: Human rights research and studies
- Sub item e: Networking with Member States and other international and regional organizations

\*\*\*\*\*



**Program of Work  
7<sup>th</sup> Session of the OIC Independent Permanent  
Human Rights Commission (IPHRC)**

**Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia  
19 – 23 April 2015**

---

**Day 1 – Sunday 19 April, 2015**

<b>10:00 – 13:00 Hrs.</b>	<b>Meeting I</b>	<b>[Closed]</b>
10:00- 10:10 Hrs.	Recitation of verses from the Holy Qur’an	
10:10- 10:30 Hrs	Opening remarks by the Chair of the IPHRC	
10:30- 10:45 Hrs.	Adoption of the Agenda and Program of Work	
10:45- 11:00 Hrs.	Briefing by the Chairperson and Amb Abdul Wahab about the status of the drafts on Methods of work of IPHRC and its working groups as well as decision on the proposed framework for interaction with Civil Society including NGOs	
11:00- 11:30 Hrs.	Briefing, under Agenda item 4(d) titled “Standing mechanism for monitoring the human rights situation in the Indian-occupied	

	Kashmir”, by OIC Secretary General’s Special Representative on Jammu and Kashmir Dispute.
11:30- 1200 Hrs.	Briefing by the IPHRC Secretariat on upcoming 5 <sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Istanbul Process on Res 16/18 to be hosted by OIC in Jeddah
12:00- 1300 Hrs.	Briefing by the IPHRC Secretariat on pending and new mandates of IPHRC followed by proposals from the Chairperson for consideration of the Commission
<b>13:00-14:00 Hrs.</b>	<b><i>Prayer/Lunch Break</i></b>
<b>14:00 – 17:00 Hrs.</b>	<b>MEETING II [Closed]</b>
	Discussion to continue on pending and new mandates followed by assigning of responsibilities to Commission Members for different mandates and related reports.

**Day 2 – Monday 20 April, 2015**

<b>09:00 – 12:00 Hrs.</b>	<b>MEETING III [Closed]</b>
0900-1030 hrs	Working Group on Palestine Discussion on the ongoing situation /briefing by the OIC General Secretariat and recommendations by the Working Group.
1030-1200 hrs	Working Group on Islamophobia and Muslim minorities Discussion on the ongoing situation in Myanmar & CAR. Briefing by General Secretariat and recommendations by the Working Group.
<b>12:00 – 13:00 Hrs.</b>	<b><i>Prayer/Lunch Break</i></b>
<b>13:00 – 16:00 Hrs.</b>	<b>MEETING IV [Closed]</b>
13:00 – 14:30 hrs.	Working Group on Rights of Women and Children Briefing by the OIC General Secretariat including on follow up to Baku Conference, Beijing +20 and Commission on Status of Women and recommendations by the Working Group.
14:30 – 16:00 hrs.	Working Group on the Right to Development Discussion on the follow up of the IPHRC Seminar (Dec 2014) on negative impact of economic and financial Sanctions and recommendations of the Working Group.

**Day 3 – Tuesday 21 April, 2015**  
**(Formal opening Ceremony)**

<b>10:00 – 13:00 Hrs.</b>	<b>MEETING V</b>	<b>[Open]</b>
1000-1010 hours	Recitation of Holy Quran	
1010-1025 hours	Opening Remarks by the Chairperson	
1030-1050 hours	Remarks by the Secretary General of OIC	
1100-1300 hours	Open discussion on the Theme of the Session i.e. “Protection of Family Values” by the Panelists, Commissioners and Member States	

**13:00 – 14:00 Hrs.**                    ***Prayer/Lunch Break***

<b>14:00 – 17:00 Hrs.</b>	<b>MEETING VI</b>	<b>[Open]</b>
1400-1700 hours	Continuation of the morning discussion and statements by Member States and responses from the Panelists. <i>(Based on the discussion, the Commission will prepare and issue a statement on the subject at the end of the Session)</i>	

**Day 4 – Wednesday 22 April, 2015**

<b>10:00 – 13:00 Hrs.</b>	<b>MEETING VII</b>	<b>[Closed]</b>
	Discussion and finalization of decisions on issues discussed during the Session including meetings of the Working Groups	

**1300 – 1400 Hrs.**                    ***Prayer / Lunch Break***

<b>14:00 – 17:00 Hrs.</b>	<b>MEETING VIII</b>	<b>[Open]</b>
	Presentation of the reports of the Working Groups by respective Chairs to the Commission and other decisions followed by Comments and views of Member States	

**Day 5 – Thursday 23 April, 2015**

<b>09:00 – 10:45 Hrs.</b>	<b>MEETING IX</b>	<b>[Closed]</b>
	Presentation and adoption of the draft Report of the Session and Provisional Agenda for the next Session	

**10:45 – 11:00 Hrs.**                    ***Coffee Break***

**11:00 – 12:00 Hrs.**

**MEETING X**

**[Open]**

CLOSING CEREMONY

\*\*\*\*\*

**Bismillahi Arahmani Arrahim**

**Tuesday 21/4/2015**

**Excellency, Mr. Secretary General  
Excellencies the Representatives of the Member States,  
Honourable Commissioners,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh**

May I first of all extend to you, on behalf of my colleagues, the assurance of our sincere thanks and appreciation for your steadfast support and interest in the IPHR Commission and for involving it in your thoughts and visions on strategies to promote human rights in the OIC Member States. We consider your message to the Commission as a valuable stimulant and support for its action, bearing priceless comments and guidance which all converge towards the same path that we seek to walk on, particularly in the current stage of the Commission's life.

May I also extend our profound thanks and appreciation to the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Commission's headquarter state, for their continued support to complete the preparation work for the IPHRC headquarters and to provide the required the technical tools and logistics in favour of a steady and smooth work progress in the near future, God willing. We also wish to extend our thanks to the General Secretariat for its facilitation of the Commission's work.

**Excellency, Mr. Secretary General, Honourable Ladies and Gentlemen,**

We are gathered here today in the Seventh Session of the Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC), this being our first exercise for the year 2015. I feel honoured to have been entrusted with the chairmanship of the Commission for this year, as a representative of the Arab Group, and I pray to Allah, Mighty and Sublime be He, to grant me the benefit of His Divine help in carrying out this mission to achieve the tasks inscribed under the Commission's mandate in a way that would inject greater efficiency in its recommendations and consultative role and elevate it as a regional organ that seeks to promote, consolidate and protect human rights. I look forward to your support and to us working hand in hand for the achievement of these goals in the service of the causes of our Islamic Ummah.

Allow me to seize upon this opportunity, in my own name and on behalf of all of you, to extend our congratulations to our brother Mr. Mohamed Kawu Ibrahim, our outgoing chairman for the African Group, on the sagacity with which he steered our Commission throughout the past year,

and our appreciation for his valuable efforts to consolidate the Commission and its structures in favour of an early launch of its action for the fulfillment of its tasks.

May I also, with your permission, welcome our new Commission members, and we look forward to their valuable participation.

### **Excellency, Mr. Secretary General**

#### **Ladies, and Gentlemen**

The Commission has, over the past three years, successfully established well-defined rules which allow it to fulfill its duties in full harmony with its guiding regulations, having adopted, in the process, its rules of procedures, its modalities for interaction with national human rights institutions, and having also set up its own website and submitted reports to the ministerial council, in fulfillment of a mandate, along with another qualitative report on Islamophobia to which the Commission will soon start putting the final touches prior to its submission to the Council. Furthermore, the Commission is currently undertaking a final review of the draft rules for the activation and streamlining of its work, in preparation for their adoption at the present session.

Over the past two days, the Commission looked into the issues on its agenda and listened to a briefing from Amb. Yahaya Lawal, the interim-representative of the Secretary General's special envoy to Jammu and Kashmir, on the human rights conditions there, within the framework of the standing mechanism to watch humanitarian conditions in India-occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

The Commission also listened to a briefing from its Secretariat regarding the coming fifth meeting of the Istanbul Process on resolution 16/18 due to be hosted at the OIC General Secretariat in Jeddah this coming June. Within the same framework, the Commission drew significant benefit from the informative briefing submitted by H.E. Amb. Zamir Akram, the OIC Group Coordinator at the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

The Commission also deliberated on its pending issues and new mandates, just as it has undertaken an in-depth study of the practical steps that need to be taken to actuate its advisory role and to react to the ideas mooted by H.E. the Secretary General. Indeed the Commission has evolved a detailed proposal for the promotion of studies and researches as an empowering tool for it to better enhance and protect human rights in harmony with the Islamic values and core objectives, and to follow on the ideas included in the Secretary General's message. In this context, I am pleased to convey to you that the Commission has set up a working group to start reviewing and amending the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam, in line with the Secretary General's request and the mandate we anticipate from the Ministerial Council. Also the Commission has set up a working group to examine the issue of human rights and that of the so-called "sexual orientation" and any link between them. Another working

group has also been set up to consider the boundary that separates between freedom of speech and excitement to hatred or discrimination. On the other hand, the Commissioners will start preparing studies on issues of high priority level for the Commission itself and for the Member States, namely:

- Women's Rights in Islam and in the Member State's laws and legislations.
- Combating Terrorism and Extremism
- Respect for Cultural and Religious Diversity
- The Phenomenon of Islamophobia
- Inheritance Rights
- The Rights of Minorities in Islam.

**Excellency, Mr. Secretary General**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The Commission's working groups have held their consultative meetings yesterday and were extensively briefed by the various departments in the General Secretariat on the situation in Palestine, on Islamophobia, Muslim minorities, Women's and Children's rights, and the right to development. Tomorrow the Commission will be submitting its reports and recommendations to the Member States.

**Excellency, Mr. Secretary General, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Today the Commission is holding its thematic session which will focus on a most critical issue which is "The protection of family values". The pivotal role played by the family, as a unit, in ensuring the right conditions for the development and wellbeing of its members has become common knowledge worldwide, and the importance of the family as the key building-block in society has been duly acknowledged in the universal declarations of human rights and other international documents and agreements on human rights, particularly in the two international conventions and the agreement on Child rights and as well as in other similar international instruments.

The family assumes a unique role in providing protection and nurturance for children, who represent posterity. The family ensures for them a healthy upbringing within a healthy atmosphere, and helps them develop the right personality for them to be worthy contributors to the erection of a responsible society where peace and stability would prevail.

Islam has paid interest for the family to be built on strong foundations such as to ensure its resilience and strength. Islam has enveloped the family with care and nurturance. The Holy Quran clearly sets out the pillars of a healthy family, foremost of which: mutuality, compassion and high ethics. Islam also provides guidance for the projection of women's and children's rights as well as those of senior citizens and special-needs persons. It also provides guidance as

to the values that need to be consolidated and upheld for the benefit of building open-minded, forward-looking and prosperous societies. Also the OIC pays particular interest to women and children, to the family's protection and to coordination in society. The OIC Third Extraordinary Islamic Summit held in 2005 endorsed the idea of setting up a special department in the General Secretariat to cater for the affairs of the family and its members.

**Excellency, Mr. Secretary General,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

In the present session we will focus in our deliberations, on the following main items: Reaffirming the concept of the family as society's nucleus that needs to be protected – The importance of ensuring the full implementation by stakeholders of all rights established in international documents for the family's protection – Highlighting the supreme importance which Islam accords to the family as a focal point for the promotion of social justice and wellbeing, and as a fundamental constituent of the Muslim society, Drawing attention to the multiple economic and social challenges facing the family and its members, such as poverty, displacement and dispersal, as well as subjection to conflicts or foreign occupation. Our agenda items also include exploring the philosophical aspects of the concepts propounded by certain circles such as the so-called "sexual orientation", and reaffirming the family's definition as established in international documents on human rights. We look forward to an interactive and inspiring dialogue between the panel members of today, the Commissioners, the Member States and the General Secretariat, it being understood that, at the conclusion of this session, the Commission will be issuing a summary of the deliberations along with the consequent findings and recommendations.

In conclusion, allow me to extend to you all, once again, on behalf of the Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission, our heartfelt thanks and appreciation for your unfailing support which we hope will be an enduring favor to us, and we look forward to a rich and fruitful exchange of ideas.

Wassamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh

-----

**ANNEX-C**

**Statement of the Secretary General at the 7<sup>th</sup> Session of  
the OIC Independent Permanent Commission of Human Rights  
Jeddah, KSA 19-23 April 2015**

**Respected Ambassador Ilham, Chairperson of the IPHRC,**

**Distinguished Commission Members, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

First and foremost, let me congratulate you Madam Chairperson on your election as the new Chair for 2015. Your election reflects the confidence of your fellow commissioners on your leadership abilities and upholds IPHRC's strong belief in the ideal of gender equality. I wish you well in your mandate and am confident that like your predecessor Ambassador Mohammad Kawu Ibrahim, to whom goes our heartfelt thanks, you will do a great job.

Let me also take this opportunity to formally welcome the newly elected Commission Members. It was an opportune occasion to meet them in February and note their commitment and readiness to contribute to the work of IPHRC. We wish them well in their future endeavours and assure that the OIC General Secretariat will continue to extend the needed support and assistance to the IPHRC for performing its mandated tasks.

Together with the Commission Members, we welcome all the distinguished guests and participants of this important meeting to the OIC Secretariat, which is the home to all OIC family members. I am confident that, as in the past, this meeting will have productive discussions and produce substantive outcomes on all issues of concern to the OIC.

An important aspect of your work is the independent nature of IPHRC that is must for its effectiveness as well as credibility. The OIC firmly believes in this principle and accordingly established it as one of its independent organs with its own Headquarters in Jeddah. The decision is being implemented and the host country has earmarked a building as the IPHRC Headquarters and the Headquarters agreement is in the final stages. These developments would certainly lead to bringing added stability and coherence in the work of the Commission both from the administrative and financial as well as substantive perspectives. In the meantime you can continue to rely on the full support of the OIC Secretariat.

**Madam Chairperson, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

We attach high importance to the work and activities of IPHRC and sincerely believe that this independent human rights body is needed not only for introspection and helping Member

States in crafting, devising and implementing appropriate policies that are in line with fundamental human rights but also to dispel the growing misperception about the incompatibility between Islam and human rights.

During our past interactions, I have repeatedly stressed on some of the challenges that IPHRC must look into, on priority. These proposals were also sent to IPHRC in writing and the former Chairperson responded positively to them. There is no doubt in our mind that the Commission will address these issues with desired urgency and seriousness.

**Respected Commissioners,**

The Executive Director of the IPHRC keeps us abreast of your work and it is a pleasure to note, a number of productive activities such as IPHRC Workshop in Tehran on Negative Impact of Sanctions on enjoyment of human rights in affected countries; your well articulated pronouncement on the menace of combating extremism in Islam as well as decision on how to interact with National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) from Member States. It is equally heartening to note your decision to focus on a theme of contemporary concern to the OIC in each of your sessions. It will provide the opportunity to the Commission to have in-depth discussions with relevant experts and Member States and come up with a substantive outcome that can be used as a reference by the OIC during discussions in relevant international human rights forums.

**Respected Commission Members,**

You would recall that during our past interactions, the need to create a yardstick has repeatedly been emphasized so that each individual member state can look at to measure the distance between the Islamic human right model and its own laws and practices. To do this job, the Commission must review the existing OIC human rights instruments vis-à-vis universal human rights norms and instruments and to make suggestions for improvements, updating or strengthening, as and where required. The upcoming CFM is expected to echo this request to the IPHRC that will help provide a legal basis for the needed review. As an advisory mechanism to the OIC on human rights issues, your contribution on this matter would greatly help Member States to introduce a unified OIC perspective on various evolving human rights issues. I hope the Commission would dedicate specific time to this important mandate and come up with concrete recommendations, on priority.

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentleman,**

Let me now turn to the topic of today's thematic debate, "Protection of Family Values", which is yet another important subject of concern to the OIC.

Family is the fundamental unit of a society and its pivotal role in providing the conducive and apt environment for the development and well being of its members has been widely acknowledged by international community.

Islam recognized the central role of family in the Society and provides clear guidance on the rights of its members, in particular its vulnerable members i.e. of women, children and elderly. Islam also promotes the family values that need to be practiced and promoted for building peaceful, progressive and prosperous societies.

Following such guidance, the OIC too attaches high importance to the rights of women, children and to the protection and promotion of the fundamental unit of Family in the society. Based on the importance of the subject, the Third Extraordinary OIC Summit in 2005 decided to establish a Department of Family Affairs in the OIC General Secretariat that deals with the subject of Family and its members in a comprehensive manner.

The importance of this fundamental unit of society has also been acknowledged in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR). A number of other internationally agreed documents also reaffirm the vital role of the family in society, acknowledge its key role in fostering social development, cohesion and integration, and underscore its primary responsibility for the nurturing, guidance, and protection of children for the full and harmonious development of their personality, which contribute to building responsible and peaceful societies that are at peace within and without.

In accordance with international human rights law, States are under obligation to provide the widest possible support and protection for the family as the natural and fundamental group unit of society and allow it to fully assume its role in the community and provide conducive environment for the growth and well-being of its members. Unfortunately, however, this important unit of society continue to face various challenges in different parts of the world.

Despite such worldwide recognition and acknowledgement of the role of family and its values, we are getting growingly concerned for the 'protection of family values' as there continues to be new and divisive definitions of the concepts of family, which are neither universally recognized nor conform to human rights standards. Such controversies are not only counterproductive to the universal efforts to strengthening the unit of Family but have also created undesired divisions among UN Member States on a range of related topics and rights.

In the backdrop of these developments, it is important to promote cooperation at all levels on family issues; undertake concerted actions to strengthen family-centered policies and programmes as part of an integrated comprehensive approach to human rights and development; share good practices in family policymaking; review challenges faced by families worldwide and recommend human-rights based solutions.

Our Member States have the moral and legal obligation to devise and enact family focused/friendly policies and measures in different fields that create an environment supportive of the family as well as helps in developing the capacity to monitor the impact of social and economic decisions and actions on the well-being of families, in particular the vulnerable members of the family such as women, children, disabled and elderly in different situations.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguished participants**

In view of the foregoing, and as we have indicated in the concept note in a detailed manner, we would like the debate of the current session to include and focus on the following:

- a) Reaffirm the notion that the family is the basic and fundamental group unit of society;
- b) Stress full implementation by all stakeholders of the principles and rights enshrined in international human rights instruments concerning the protection of the institution of the Family and its members;
- c) Highlight the laudable importance given to the institution of family within Islam and specific teachings and guidance on how to extend maximum support for this fundamental unit of society for promoting piety, social justice and development that are important elements of Muslim societies;
- d) Draw attention to various challenges faced by members of families in the sphere of socio economic constraints such as poverty and under-development;
- e) Emphasize the benefit of including family centered policies/programmes in the national and international development agenda, including the post 2015 agenda; and
- f) Deliberate on both the philosophical and human rights perspective of newly introduced notion of family being promoted by certain quarters based on “sexual orientation” with a view to supporting the internationally recognized definition of family that respects rights and duties of various members of family such as single parents, guardians, elder or broader members of the family while avoiding to create new concepts that are divisive, culturally and religiously unacceptable and do not conform to international human rights standards.

### **Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen**

We are confident that this Commission would help bring a paradigm shift within the OIC in the way universal rights and freedoms flow together with Islamic values to offer a coherent and strong system aimed at facilitating the full enjoyment of all human rights. Your expert advice could help the OIC to formulate policies and chart plans to addressing challenges faced by Ummah at national, regional and international levels in the field of human rights. I wish you productive discussions in the remaining time of the Session and look forward to seeing the outcome of this session as well as hearing your future plans to tackle different IPHRC mandates.

**Thank you.**

ANNEX-D

**OIC Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC) concludes its 7<sup>th</sup> Regular Session in Jeddah held from 19 – 23 April 2015**

**Jeddah, 23 April 2015:** The OIC Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC) held its 7<sup>th</sup> Session in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from 19-23 April 2015. Representatives of OIC Member and Observer States, Secretary General and other senior officials of the OIC, Islamic Fiqh Academy as well as Media representatives attended the Session.

In her opening remarks, the newly elected Chairperson of IPHRC, Ambassador Ilham Ibrahim, gave an overview of the activities carried out by the Commission in 2014 as well as dwelt on the progress made by IPHRC on various mandates given to it by the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM). To that end she expressed thanks for the positive response received from Member States on the IPHRC's Workshop on "Negative impact of economic and financial sanctions on the enjoyment of human rights by the people of affected countries" held in Tehran last year as well as holding of the thematic debate on "Combating extremism and intolerance in Islam" during the 6<sup>th</sup> IPHRC Session. Outcome documents of both these events contained important recommendations for different stakeholders and were widely appreciated as useful inputs for consideration of OIC Member States.

On behalf of the Commission, IPHRC Chair condemned the latest inhuman killing of over 100 students in Jerrisa University, Kenya by supposedly Al-shahab militants as well as hundreds of innocent civilians at the hands of Daash/ISIL in various countries of Middle East and Africa. Expressing solidarity with the victims of these terrorist acts, the Commission reiterated that such extremist ideologies, radicalism, intolerance and terrorism have nothing to do with Islam, which is a religion of peace and promotes moderation and balance in its teachings.

The Commission expressed strong concern on the plight of migrants from Africa to Europe, in particular recent reports of their drowning in thousands before they arrived European shores. It called upon relevant UN and European authorities to take all possible measures to address the subject in a comprehensive manner including the need to afford all possible assistance in accordance with the established international human rights norms and standards. The Commission further expressed its concern on the continued plight of the abducted girls by Boko Haram and urged relevant authorities to take all possible actions to locate and liberate the kidnapped girls, on priority.

Mr. Iyad Ameen Madani, Secretary General of the OIC, also addressed the meeting and conveyed his appreciation on the useful activities carried out by the IPHRC in line with the aims and objectives of the Commission. Mr. Madani stressed the importance of the independence of the Commission's work, including intellectual independence in discussions and decision-making, and expressed the full moral, logistical and financial support of the General Secretariat for the IPHRC's work. Referring to the thematic focus of the session, the Secretary General stated that the topic of "Protection of Family Values" was of utmost importance to the OIC, which must be protected and promoted in accordance with the Islamic values and teachings that were also in line with the universal human rights standards. He recommended holding a special conference of the OIC on the subject that could look into definition as well as measures needed to address various challenges by this fundamental unit of society and its members in different contexts and situations. He welcomed participation of Fiqh Academy in the debate and urged to build bridges of communications between the two institutions with a view to incorporating Islamic perspective on the interrelated subjects and projecting unified views and positions. Welcoming the progress made on a number of important subjects, he underscored the need for IPHRC to work on establishing a yardstick on Islamic human rights against which Member States could measure their relevant policies and progress. Mr. Madani emphasized that the advisory status of IPHRC not only entitled it to advise OIC Member States on human rights issues, but also empowers the Commission to defend Islamic values and present a true image of this peaceful religion.

During the five day session, the Commission had in-depth discussions on all items on its agenda including human rights violations in Occupied Palestinian Territories; civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights in OIC Member States; specific mandates given to it by the CFM as well as procedural issues relating to its working methods and establishment of a mechanism for interaction with NGOs and broader civil society. The Commission also interacted with the representative of the OIC Special Envoy on Jammu and Kashmir dispute on the human rights situation in the Indian Occupied Kashmir (IoK) and decided that its Standing Mechanism on monitoring the human rights violations in IoK will closely collaborate with the OIC General Secretariat on the subject. The Commission also called upon Myanmar authorities to ensure protection of the right to life and wellbeing of its Rohingya population; bring to justice those responsible for inciting hatred and violence as well as take steps to ensure non-discrimination on any grounds in laws and practice including denial of citizenship to Rohingya Muslims.

In line with the practice of addressing issues of contemporary concern to Member States, the 7<sup>th</sup> IPHRC Session held the thematic debate on "Protection of Family Values" that not only reiterated the importance of Family as the natural and fundamental unit of society, which is entitled to protection from society and State but also addressed various challenges faced both

by the institution of family as well as its members in different contexts. OIC Member and Observer States expressed keen interest in the topic and stressed the importance of collective action to protect, preserve and promote these values, which are considered as crucial in developing progressive, peaceful and tolerant societies that are at peace within and without. The meeting reaffirmed the fundamental definition of the family as a long-term consensual relationship between a man and a woman who are bound by the reciprocal rights and responsibilities enshrined in Islamic teachings. It also condemned the growing trend of confusing the definition of family with new and controversial notions of LGBT families based on sexual orientation that were neither universal nor recognized by international human rights standards. A separate communiqué was issued on the subject that summarizes the discussion and views of IPHRC on the subject.

The Commission expressed grave concern and strongly condemned the continuing illegitimate Israeli practice of detaining Palestinian citizens without due process, ongoing and expanding settlement activities, continued blockade of Gaza strip, holding Palestinian Authority from collecting revenues, restrictions on freedom of movement of Palestinians as well as excavation and confiscation of land and property in surrounding of Al-Aqsa mosque, which were all illegal activities under international law and violations of the responsibilities of Israel as occupying power. It urged Palestine to file cases against Israeli violations of their human rights in relevant international courts to seek justice. It also urged the international community to play its due role in making requisite efforts to pave the way for the long awaited just and peaceful settlement of this dispute that would allow Palestinian to have their own independent, viable and contiguous State with East Jerusalem as its capital. The Commission also recommended the OIC to hold regular events at relevant international forums to raise awareness about the plight of Palestinians and closely coordinate with UN Human Rights Council in bringing to fore the ongoing Israeli human rights violations. IPHRC also expressed its strong interest in visiting Palestine to observe the human rights situation on ground.

The Commission unequivocally condemned the recent spate of hateful speech against Muslims and denigration of Islamic religious symbols and personalities under the garb of freedom of expression. It renewed the call for combating denigration and negative religious stereotyping as well as proscribing advocacy to religious hatred that leads to incitement to discrimination and imminent violence. To that end, it welcomed the 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of Istanbul Process (3-4 June 2015 in Jeddah) and urged all stakeholders to focus on the ways to ensure the full and effective implementation of the Action Plan contained in Res 16/18.

The Commission also delved in detail on the issues of right to development and human rights of women and children. It welcomed the fact that the Outcome Document of its Seminar on Negative impact of sanctions has been well received by the OIC Member States and urged them

to closely follow its recommendations in particular the one on establishing a monitoring mechanism within OIC Secretariat to assess the human rights impact of such sanctions. It also identified “science and technology” as one of the important areas of collaboration among OIC Member States, within the ambit of right to development and decided to dwell in detail for specific recommendations on the subject in due course.

In the area of human rights of women and children, Commission delved in detail on issues related to gender equality, violence against women and children. It welcomed the decision of the Government of Malaysia to host a conference on the subject of implementation of OIC Plan of Action on Advancement of Women in 2015 and urged Member States to take all steps necessary to realize the recommendations made in the Outcome document of the 5<sup>th</sup> Ministerial meeting of OIC on Role of Women in Advancement of OIC States, held in Baku, Azerbaijan in November 2014. It was decided that the Commission would prepare studies on specific areas of rights of women and girls including the right of inheritance in Islam. It also called upon Member States to ratify the statute of OIC Women Development Organization enabling it to start its meaningful work.

In her concluding remarks, IPHRC Chairperson thanked Member States for their keen interest in the work of the Commission as well as sustained support for its activities. She reaffirmed Commission’s strong commitment to its aims and objectives as well as expressed its resolve to fulfilling various responsibilities entrusted by Member States in the area of promoting human rights. Amb Ilham also expressed gratitude to the OIC Secretary General for his personal interest in the work of the Commission as well as for providing strong support for the smooth functioning of the Commission. Additionally, the Chairperson shared with Member States the future plans and projects that the Commission intends to deliberate upon, such as strengthening research and writing reports / position papers on the right of inheritance in Islam; rights of minorities in Islam; Combating extremism; promoting/upholding human rights while combating terrorism; importance of cultural and religious diversity while promoting human rights; freedom of expression and hate speech; issue of sexual orientation as well as the need to reviewing the existing OIC human rights instruments.

With regard to the CFM mandate relating to the Muslims of Central African Republic, the Commission’s delegation is proceeding to Banjul and will hold in-depth exchange of views with the African Commission on Human and People’s Rights for joint action on this issue as well as other matters of mutual importance.

The Commission decided to address the theme of “Freedom of expression and hate speech” during its 8<sup>th</sup> Session. IPHRC further decided that its 2015 Annual Workshop will be dedicated to the subject of Human Rights Education and thanked the Government of Indonesia for its offer

to host this workshop in Jakarta, later this year.

The Commission expressed its sincere thanks and appreciation to the host country, the government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and Custodian of Two Holy Mosques for their continued support and commitments to the aims, objectives and activities of IPHRC.

.....

**IPHRC reaffirmed the importance of family as the natural and fundamental unit of society that is entitled to protection by State and Society, during its thematic debate on “Protection of Family Values” on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2015**

**Jeddah 23 April 2015:** In line with its past practice of holding thematic debates on issues of contemporary concerns to the OIC, the IPHRC held an open discussion, on 21<sup>st</sup> April, on the theme of “Protection of Family Values”. Besides Commission Members, the debate was attended by OIC Secretary General and a number of international experts who dwelt on the subject from various aspects including challenges faced both by the institution of family and its members in different contexts and situations as well as made a number of important recommendations on how to strengthen this fundamental unit of society.

Representative of OIC Member and Observer States also expressed keen interest in the debate and stressed the importance of collective action to protect, preserve and promote these values, which are considered as crucial in developing progressive, peaceful and tolerant societies that are at peace within and without.

At the end of the debate, the Commission reaffirmed the fundamental definition of family as a long-term consensual relationship between a man and a woman who are bound by the reciprocal rights and responsibilities enshrined in Islamic teachings. IPHRC reiterated that men and women enjoy equal human dignity and fundamental human rights but have different roles and responsibilities within the family and society, and that Islam nowhere implies superiority or inferiority to either of the sexes.

IPHRC further reaffirmed that as outlined in the relevant international standards such as Art 16 (3) of UDHR, family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State. A number of core human rights documents such as ICCPR, ICESCR and CRC unambiguously oblige all States to provide such protection and support for the family, which serves as the custodian of morals and traditional values recognized by the community and society. The Commission strongly condemned the growing trend of confusing the definition with new and controversial notions of sexual orientation and LGBT families that are neither universal nor recognized by international human rights standards.

While highlighting the importance of providing protection to each member of the family, the important role and responsibility of parents was reiterated that allows them special rights in decisions about the kind of religious, moral and educational activities of their children. The meeting emphasized the need for greater awareness for children on sexual education in accordance with their evolving mental capabilities but condemned the practice of promoting

divisive and non-universal rights of comprehensive sexuality education to children, which include morally unacceptable concepts, behaviours and practices to many religious communities and societies including Islam.

The Commission emphasized that every country or group of countries have the right to formulate their laws and regulations based on their value systems, including in family affairs. This right was affirmed in many provisions within international laws and international human right instruments including Section I (5) of the Vienna Declaration and Program of Action, which amply highlights the principle of due recognition and respect for cultural and religious diversity in the field and application of human rights.

The meeting stressed that family in Islam was the core unit of society which has the task and fundamental role in maintaining the social cohesion. Family in Islam refers to both nuclear and extended structures. Ideal family consists of husband and wife but single-parent family, especially woman-headed family should be acknowledged as the consequence of divorce and other factors. Islam also provides guidance to protect this kind of family through different mechanisms such as inheritance, donation as well as the extended familial support system from the community and the government.

The meeting stressed that in Islam, sexual relationship between men and women was recognized and legal only within the bounds of marriage. It further stressed that a Good society can only be upheld by the healthy and stable family, which is pronounced by the Quran as “Sakina, Mawwada and rahma” (comfort, love and mercy) and can only be achieved through the marriage between man and woman as husband and wife (father and mother to their children). Any practice that potentially threaten the integrity of the family should not be seen as part of “freedom of choice.

Additionally the IPHRC affirmed that a healthy and stable family could only be accomplished when husband and wife are considered equal in dignity and fundamental human rights both in the family and society. They should be treated based on gender justice and gender equity. Mutual support and complementing each other between husband and wife, as enshrined in Islamic values, were the basis to carry out equal responsibilities and to enjoy basic rights within the families. Equal opportunities for all members of the family in developing their physical, mental, spiritual, intellectual and other human capacities must be ensured beside providing protection to members of family from all forms of physical, psychological and sexual violence.

**Recommendations:**

IPHRC underlined the importance of undertaking advocacy activities at relevant forums, including working with pro-family NGOs for holding conferences and seminars with the view to

promoting and advancing family values. In this context, The IPHRC invited the CFM and the OIC Social and Family Department to organize broad-based international conferences in collaboration with like-minded geographical groups, institutions of civil Societies, particularly NGOs and NHRI in the OIC Member States.

IPHRC expressed strong concerns on the contents of a number of publications issued by various UN bodies such as UNICEF, WHO and UNFPA that elaborate on the so-called notion of sexual orientation and comprehensive sexuality education for children as disturbing and morally unacceptable to various religious values as well as potentially harmful to the very institution of family. It urged these UN bodies to refrain from using such advocacy material that has not been approved or adopted by consensus, thus undermining the spirit of the universally accepted human rights values, norms and instruments.

IPHRC called upon all Member States to support the OIC positions and resolutions on the family issue, including family values and protection of the family.

IPHRC recognized and stressed the urgent need to find ways and means to effectively protect the family and family integration in conflict and post-conflict situations as well as other emergencies and situations such as migrant and refugee families. To that end, it urged OIC Member States to ensure provision of basic human rights and legal protection to these affected families in particular the right for education and health.

IPHRC called on all stakeholders, including UN mechanisms, NGOs and national human rights institutions to put the family at the core of their agendas as well as avoid the misconceptions and controversies, which contradict the universal family values.

**ANNEX-F**

**Statement of the OIC Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC) regarding the recent drowning of African migrants to Europe in the Mediterranean Sea**

**Jeddah 23 April 2015:** The IPHRC is dismayed by the recent unfortunate drowning of thousands of African Migrants in the Mediterranean Sea. These innocent people were fleeing their countries for diverse socio-economic and security reasons forcing them to take this dangerous route to Europe in search of better prospects for them and their families' future, safety and economic prosperity.

The callous response from relevant authorities to take necessary steps to ensure better vigilance has led to unnecessary loss of thousands of innocent lives, which is irreversible. Inadequacy of response both from the relevant international and European authorities to prevent such a loss is regrettable and deplorable.

IPHRC urges the international community including relevant UN bodies to show compassion by facing up to their international responsibility and immediately take all necessary and appropriate remedial measures to ensure that such tragedies do not happen again. It also emphasized the need to addressing the root causes of the problem in a more coherent and systematic way (such as reasons that lead these peoples to leave their homelands and embark on such dangerous journeys) rather than limiting themselves to tackling the symptoms alone.

\*\*\*\*\*