



**Manama Declaration for the 61st session of the
UN Commission on the Status of Women
7 February 2017**

We, the ministers and representatives of the Member States participating in the regional preparatory meeting for the 61st session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, which was held on the sidelines of the meetings of the 36th session of the Arab Women Committee headed by the Kingdom of Bahrain, met in Manama in the Kingdom of Bahrain on 7 February 2017 in cooperation with the Arab League and UN Women to coordinate the Arab position and determine the priorities of the region concerning the issues which will be discussed during the 61st session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women to be held from 13-24 March 2017 in New York.

We confirm what is contained in the Arab and international conventions on the advancement of the status of women.

We are aware of and appreciate the unprecedented circumstances which the Arab region is going through due to the Israeli occupation, wars, armed conflicts, terrorism and the implications of refugee crisis, displacement and migration, as well as the economic circumstances and formidable challenges the region faces.

As we appreciate the magnitude of the responsibility placed on the shoulders of the Arab countries to implement the sustainable development goals in light of these circumstances, we confirm the commitment of our countries to work to achieve an Arab agenda falling within the framework of the implementation of the goals of sustainable development and consistent with the special and exceptional circumstances which our Arab societies are going through.

As we consider the economic empowerment of women in the changing work environment to be a fundamental goal of sustainable development;

And being appreciative of the efforts expended by the Arab League and UN Women in the support of Arab cooperation and integration and the strengthening of the unity of the Arab position in international forums; and being in solidarity at the regional level to promote gender equality and empower women, we confirm the following:

1. The women's right to work provided that justice and fairness, equal pay for equal work, a working environment which ensures that occupational health and safety conditions, are met and women receive the non-tangible rewards for work;
2. Support of the national mechanisms concerned with women and the provision of the financial resources to them so that they can in turn play an effective role in the monitoring, dissemination and observance of the achievement of equality between the sexes. This is to guarantee economic

rights through putting in place appropriate policies and working with the various institutions involved in the implementation of this;

3. Strengthening of the laws and regulatory frameworks which prohibit discrimination against women with regard to entry into the labour market and recruitment terms and provisions;
4. Enforcement and implementation of the laws and regulations of the working environment which prohibit discrimination in the recruitment, retention and promotion of women in the private and public sectors, and ensuring redress in cases of non-application;
5. Working to eliminate the arbitrary dismissal of women and to promote their participation on an equal footing in the labour market and in education and training, and encouraging women to diversify their career choices and take up roles in emerging fields and growth sectors;
6. Undertaking legislative and administrative reforms which guarantee for women the access and control of productive assets and resources, such as land and other property, credit and loans, natural resources and information and communication technologies;
7. Working to put in place and enact/enforce all laws and policies concerned with the elimination of violence against women in the workplace, and calling on the United Nations in this regard to work to ensure the right of Palestinian women working in the occupied territories to obtain legal protection and implement the legislation in the labour sector;
8. Taking special measures to ensure that vulnerable women enjoy equal access to decent work of good quality in the labour market;
9. Taking measures to protect and enable working women, including migrants, in the informal sector;
10. Increasing the opportunities for women to assume leadership roles in trade unions and labour organisations, and urging the leadership of labour unions to represent the interests of working women effectively;
11. Providing a supportive environment for the work of women, including childcare facilities and safe transportation, and stressing the role of the municipal councils, private sector, civil society and cooperatives in providing childcare facilities particularly for women in the informal sector;
12. Providing health services and insurance to women, particularly working women, as a basis to ensure their participation and continuation in work, especially with regard to their reproductive health;
13. Establishing and strengthening the monitoring mechanisms to encourage the private sector to achieve equality between the sexes and empower women economically through the "Women's Empowerment Principles";
14. Supporting entrepreneurship and promoting women's start up businesses through the creation of business incubators and skills development centres and supporting small and medium-scale enterprises, and encouraging financial institutions to finance women's enterprises;
15. Encouraging governments to allocate a share of government tenders and procurement to small and medium-scale enterprises owned by women;

16. Putting in place and implementing policies which promote and protect women's rights and decent work in global value chains, guided by the best international practices in this regard;
17. Implementing laws which combat human trafficking, especially women and children;
18. Urging the development of databases to monitor indicators of the informal economy classified according to the criteria of the International Labour Organization;
19. Supporting and empowering women, in particular young women, to gain skills and training in new and emerging fields, in particular information technology, engineering and mathematics and mastering digital and skills and innovations, through widening the scope of educational and training opportunities;
20. Encouraging the transfer and adaptation of technology to support the employment of women in decent work opportunities of good quality in the green economy and in the field of mitigation and adaptation to confront the effects of climate change.

Manama - Bahrain, 7 February 2017