

بِسْمِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



Statement of the State of Qatar

On Behalf

Of

**COOPERATION COUNCIL  
FOR  
THE ARAB STATES OF THE GULF (GCC)**

Delivered by

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Before

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The United Nations General Assembly

On

Agenda Item 56 "Advancement of Women

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Mr. Chairman,

I have the honor to speak on behalf the States Member of the Cooperation Council of the Arab States of The Gulf, which comprises the United Arab Emirates, the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Sultanate of Oman, the State of Kuwait and the State of Qatar. Allow me at the outset to extend thanks to Mr. Sha Zukang, the Under Secretary General for Economic and Social affairs, Ms. Rachel Mayanja, the Assistant Secretary General and the Special adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women, Ms. Ines Alberdi, the Executive Director of the United Nations Fund for the Advancement of Women (UNIFEM), and Ms. Carol Hanan, the Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women, for their statements.

Mr. Chairman,

The issues of women have commanded the attention of their Majesties and their Highnesses, the Leaders of the GCC States, which has focused since the inception of the Council in 1981 on the means to develop the status of the Gulf women, emphasizing their role and enabling them to participate effectively and meaningfully in the movement and development of society, while promoting their greater participation in leadership and decision making positions. They have come to participate in the three branches of government, the legislative, the executive and the judiciary in some states of the Council, thus affirming the Arab and Islamic values that seek to integrate the roles of men and women, underscoring the importance of continuous research into the issues of women, and of the establishment of statistical and research data bases to provide information in support of policy formulation and planning pertaining to women.

Mr. Chairman,

The hallmark of the period between the mid- nineties and the present day has been the major developments that have greatly affected the process for the advancement of the role women in the Gulf societies. First among these developments was the initiation by our States of the preparation



of national plans of action in order advance girl children and women in the light of Beijing Platform and Program of Action and in conformity with the provisions of our tolerant Islamic Shari'a and our national values. In this context, we would like to emphasize that our states firmly believe that the promotion of the rights of girl children and women is dependent on the actual consolidation of the rights and duties of the family, the natural basic unit of society, as provided in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it being the very basis of human nature before it was embodied in by international instruments. As for the second development, it was the establishment of the mechanisms for enabling women in the States of the GCC; our States established councils, specialized entities and departments, and Supreme National Committees devoted to women's issues for coordination and follow-up among the bodies concerned with issues of women at the level of each state.

In the framework of follow-up of the implementation of the recommendations of the UNGA 23<sup>rd</sup> Special Session "Women in the year 2000: Gender Equality, Peace and Development in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" the GCC Supreme Council, at its 23<sup>rd</sup> Session held in Doha, March 2002, instructed the Advisory Board of the Council to review the actions taken at the level of the Council States regarding the development of the status of women in the Member States, specifically in the economic and social fields. To this end, a Council committee was established to study the economic, social and family role of women. On the basis of the results of the study, the relevant future Program Action of the Council was established. It provided for the economic enabling of women through tending to the promotion of their social and family roles, enhancing their participation in the labor market, improving the terms and conditions of employment, developing the social security and retirement schemes so as to boost their economic participation, and adapting the technology to create new employment opportunities for women. Emphasis has been placed on the importance of improving the situation of limited income women and assist with their integration in the social life, protecting women from all forms of violence, sustaining efforts to eradicate illiteracy among girl children and women, developing the laws and regulations relevant to women, in line with the tenets of the Islamic Shari'a, the importance of sensitizing society to the significance of the role of women in the family and in society, ameliorating the conditions of households headed by women by enhancing their sources of income, and guiding them to the best means for benefiting from that income. A study is currently underway for the establishment of a Council



ministerial committee that would coordinate and organize the work of the councils and entities relevant to the issues of women, children and the family in the GCC States.

Mr. Chairman,

Our States have read with great interest the various reports of the Secretary General under agenda item 59 "Advancement of Women", and we appreciate the work done by the Secretariat in the preparation of these reports. In the context of the international efforts to eliminate all kinds of violence against women, we underline the statement in the Secretary General's report regarding the need to follow a holistic approach with a view to achieving progress toward the elimination of this scourge, and affirm our welcoming of and support for the global campaign launched for that purpose. However, it is necessary also to emphasize that there is no single model that can be applied in all countries, but, rather, every state must find the appropriate basis and the convenient plans to confront this violence. In this regard, our states have integrated the measures to eliminate domestic violence in general and violence against children and women in particular into national plans and programs, and established specialized institutions and hot lines to receive complaints and take the necessary actions thereon. They have also undergone a stage of legislative reviews to ensure the explicit criminalization of such offenses, and are currently engaged in augmenting the data base for domestic violence and violence against children and women, while focusing on training professionals working in the fields relevant to cooperation with international organizations.

Regarding the Secretary General's report entitled "Activities of UNIFEM", our States welcome the role UNIFEM in support of the efforts of the developing countries in implementing national development strategies, and continuously support all the praiseworthy activities of the Fund.

In the framework of the efforts to combat trafficking in women and girls, we stress the reference in the Secretary General's report to the importance of establishing both the legal and operational mechanisms capable of confronting this problem. The GCC States have provided the necessary legal frameworks, and have acceded to the UN convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocol of the Convention





on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children and Their Exploitation in Prostitution and Pornography, and their penal and criminal codes explicitly criminalize trafficking in persons, especially women and children. Moreover, in the context of cooperation among the GCC States in the domain of combating trafficking in women and girls, the Supreme Council of the GCC, in its 27<sup>th</sup> Session, held in Riyadh in September, 2000, adopted the Abu Dhabi Document of the Standard Regulations (Law) Against trafficking in persons as a guiding law for four years. These Regulations (Law), consisting of 16 articles, provide for a definition of the concept of the crime of trafficking in persons, the penalty for the perpetrator, whether a natural or a corporate person, the establishment of a national committee to combat trafficking in persons and the definition of its working procedures and terms of reference in formulating specific policies and programs, including the prevention and combating of trafficking in persons, the protection of the victims of trafficking in persons from recurrent harm and following up their condition, the preparation of research, information, media campaigns and social and economic initiatives to prevent and combat trafficking in persons and coordination with the state organs in relation to statistical information relevant to trafficking in persons. As regards the fulfillment of our obligations under these international and regional instruments, our States have sought to draw up national action plans implemented by specialized units established within the Ministries of the Interior to combat impunity and provide services to the victims.

Mr. Chairman,

The persistence of conflict in various parts of the world was another major impediment to the elimination of violence and abuse of women. In this regard, we stress the importance for the Secretary-General's reports to give special attention to the plight of women and their families who live in areas under foreign occupation, and to find urgent solutions to their tragic.

We thank you,

