

ABAAD commends the Political Declaration adopted by member states at UN CSW64

The time has come for concrete and practical action to accelerate progress towards gender equality!

ABAAD – Resource Center for Gender Equality commends the [political declaration](#) adopted by member states on March 9, 2019, as the main outcome of the 64th session of the Commission on the Status of Women. During the one-day procedural meeting, Member states expressed concern about slow progress towards the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and pledged to ramp up efforts to address gaps that hold women back.

Twenty five years since the adoption of the most ambitious agenda for the empowerment of women and girls everywhere, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action is yet to be implemented practically and concretely. Women and girls around the world continue to face systemic barriers holding them from equal participation in all areas of life. We at ABAAD strongly believe that **building stable, prosperous, inclusive and sustainable societies requires the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all women and girls. As we enter the “Decade of Action”, we expect to see concrete and practical actions to address systemic imbalances and accelerate progress towards gender equality.**

Much has been accomplished in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region in terms of awareness-raising, legislation and planning, and compliance with international agreements and conventions, progress however is often hampered due to crises, armed conflicts and entrenched traditional social norms that lead to discrimination. **Considerable political, institutional, societal, economic and cultural challenges continue to prevent the full advancement of women in society and it is estimated that it will take another [153 years](#) to close the gender gap in the MENA region.**

We call upon UN Member States to urge countries of the MENA region to:

- 1- **Lift** reservations to CEDAW and to accede to its optional protocol.
- 2- **Develop** effective national action plans, mainstream gender equality and provide the necessary budgets for the implementation of strategies, laws and measures that guarantee women's access to justice.
- 3- **Incorporate** gender equality approaches in all transitional justice tracks, without overlooking crimes and violations that affect women and girls.
- 4- **Amend** national legislations so that they are aligned with international human rights conventions and standards, and eliminate discrepancies among national laws to ensure coherence and consistency.
- 5- **Adopt** legislation and measures, and provide the necessary services to address the consequences and causes of violence, including sexual violence, faced by women in times of conflict, and recognizing this violence as a war crime, holding the perpetrators accountable and denying them impunity.
- 6- **Ensure** a rights-based approach in planning, implementing and evaluating the application of the Beijing Declaration.

