



## **Covenant on the Rights of the Child in Islam**

The State Parties to the Covenant,

Believing that the values and principles of Islam constitute the patterns of behavior of Muslim society in such a way as to realize security, stability, development and progress for the society within the family environment, which is the cornerstone of the social edifice,

Proceeding from Islamic efforts on issues of childhood, which contributed to the development of the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child,

Cognizant of the objectives of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation enshrined in its Charter and its Summit and Ministerial Conferences resolutions and of international conventions signed by its Member States.

Affirming the principles contained in Dhaka Declaration on Human Rights in Islam adopted by the 14<sup>th</sup> Council of Foreign Ministers in December 1983 and the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam adopted by the 14<sup>th</sup> CFM under resolution No.49/19-P (1990) and in the Declaration on the Rights and Care of the Child in Islam adopted by the Seventh Islamic Summit Conference under resolution No.16/7-C (1994).

Affirming the civilizational and historic role of the Islamic Ummah and in contributing to the international efforts on human rights,

Believing that basic rights and public freedoms in Islam are an integral part thereof that no one has a prerogative to interrupt, violate, or disregard;

Aware of the enormous responsibility towards the Child in particular as the vanguard and maker of the future of the Ummah;

Seeking to enhance Islamic performance in the Child sector so as to adapt frameworks and mechanisms to face the ever-accelerating changes and transformations and their repercussions on the sector;

Realizing that the first order of serious work is to gain a conscious insight into the accumulating and expected challenges facing the Ummah, particularly the adverse effects of economic and social transformations, the waning role of the family, the weakening feeling of belonging, the breaking-down of family-ties, the decline of values and ideals, the diminishing health and educational services, the Growing illiteracy rate, as well as the effects of the accelerating advancement in science and communication and the information revolution in addition to the continuing persistence of negative and old-fashioned cultural models;

Considering that children, as part of the vulnerable sector of society, bear the burden of the greater suffering as a result of natural and man-made disasters leading to

tragic consequences, such as orphanage, homelessness, and exploitation of children in military, harsh, hazardous, or illegitimate labour, and considering also the suffering of refugee children and those living under the yoke of occupation or languishing or displaced as a result of armed conflicts and famines thus fostering the spread of violence among the children and increasing the number of physically, mentally, and socially disabled children;

Believing that the situation requires a stand that establishes a commitment to the Right of the Child and confirms the determination to continue the efforts to activate these rights and overcome the obstacles standing in the way of the Ummah;

Confident that the Ummah has sufficient capabilities and resources to ensure a victory over the hurdles facing it, building on the lofty religious and social values with the family enjoying pride of place on the basis of love and mercy as well as human resources which afford it a real opportunity for comprehensive and sustainable development;

Recognizing the Child's right to grow up within a family environment governed by established values, love, and understanding so as to enable him to exercise his rights without discrimination;

Supporting the plans, programs, and projects aimed at improving the conditions of childhood in the Islamic world, including the elaboration of national legislations or regimes ensuring the child's exercise of his full rights;

Considering that the present Covenant affirms the rights of the child in the provisions of the Islamic Shariah, taking into account the domestic laws of states and the rights of children of minorities and non-Muslim communities, in affirmation of the human rights shared by the Muslim and non-Muslim child,

Have agreed as follows:

## **ARTICLE 1**

### **Definition of the Child**

For the purposes of the present Covenant, a child means every human being who, according to the law applicable to him/her, has not attained maturity.

## **ARTICLE 2**

### **Objectives**

This Covenant seeks to realize the following objectives:

1. To care for the family, strengthen its capabilities, and extend to it the necessary support to prevent the deterioration of its economic, social, or health conditions, and to habilitate the husband and wife to ensure their

fulfilment of their role of raising children physically, psychologically, and behaviourally.

2. To ensure a balanced and safe childhood and ensure the training of generations of Muslim children who believe in their creator, adhere to their faith, are loyal to their country, committed to the principles of truth and goodness in thoughts and in deeds, and to the sense of belonging to the Islamic civilization.
3. To generalize and deepen interest in the phases of childhood and adolescence and to provide full care for them so as to raise worthy generations for society.
4. To provide free, compulsory primary and secondary education for all children irrespective of gender, colour, nationality, religion, birth, or any other consideration, to develop education through enhancement of school curricula, training of teachers, and providing opportunities for vocational training.
5. To provide opportunities for the child to discover his/her talents and to recognize his/her importance and place in the society through the family and relevant institutions, and to encourage children to participate in the cultural life of society.
6. To provide the necessary care for children with special needs and for those who live in difficult conditions as well as address the causes that lead to such conditions.
7. To provide all possible assistance and support for Muslim children in all parts of the world in coordination with governments or through international mechanisms.

### **ARTICLE 3** **Principles**

To achieve the objectives contained in Article Two it is incumbent to:

1. Respect the provision of the Islamic Shariah and observe the domestic legislations of the Member States.
2. Respect the objectives and principles of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation
3. Attach high priority to the rights, interests, protection, and development of children.
4. Ensure equality in care, rights, and duties for all children.
5. Observe non-interference in the internal affairs of any State.

6. Observe the cultural and civilizational constants of the Islamic Ummah.

#### **ARTICLE 4**

##### **Obligations of States**

States Parties to this Covenant shall observe the following:

1. Respect the rights stipulated in this Covenant, and take the necessary steps to enforce it in accordance with their domestic regulations.
2. Respect the responsibilities and rights of parents, legal guardians, or other persons that are legally responsible for the child in accordance with existing domestic regulations as required by the child's interest.
3. End action based on customs, traditions or practices that are in conflict Islamic Sharia with the rights and duties stipulated in this Covenant.

#### **ARTICLE 5**

##### **Equality**

States Parties shall guarantee equality of all children as required by law to enjoy their rights and freedoms stipulated in this Covenant regardless of sex, birth, race, religion, language, political affiliation, or any other consideration affecting the right of the child, the family, or his/her representative under the law or Shariah.

#### **ARTICLE 6**

##### **The Right to Life**

1. The child shall have the right to life from when he is a fetus in his / her mother's womb or in the case of his/her mother's death; abortion should be prohibited except under necessity warranted by the interests of the mother, the fetus, or both of them. The child shall have the right to descent, ownership, inheritance, and child support.
2. States Parties to the Covenant shall guarantee the basics necessary for the survival and development of the child and for his/her protection from violence, abuse, exploitation, and deterioration of his/her living and health conditions.

#### **ARTICLE 7**

##### **Identity**

1. A child shall, from birth, have right to a good name, to be registered with authorities concerned, to have his nationality determined and to know his/her parents, all his/her relatives and foster mother by suckling.
2. States Parties to the Covenant shall safeguard the elements of the child's identity, including filiation his/her name, nationality, and family relations in

accordance with their domestic laws and shall make every effort to resolve the issue of statelessness for any child born on their territories or to any of their citizens outside their territory.

3. The child of unknown descent or who is legally assimilated to this status shall have the right to guardianship and care but without adoption. He shall have a right to a name, title and nationality.

## **ARTICLE 8**

### **Family Cohesion**

1. States Parties shall protect the family from causes of weakness and disintegration and shall work, within their available resources, to care for the family members and cause cohesion and balance among them.
2. No child shall be separated from his/her parents against their will and parents shall not have their guardianship revoked save under extreme necessity, in the interest of the child and with a legal justification, in accordance with domestic procedures, and subject to judicial rules where the opportunity is provided for both the child, one or both parents, or a family member to make their views known.
3. States Parties shall take into account in their social policies the child's best interests and if separation from his/her parents is necessary, no child shall be deprived of maintaining relations with them.
4. The child shall be permitted to leave his/her state to stay with his/her parents/or with either of them in another country provided he is not separated from them in accordance with Paragraph 2 of this Article, or his/her leaving does not violate the restrictions imposed by virtue of applicable procedures in the state concerned.

## **ARTICLE 9**

### **Personal Freedoms**

1. Every child capable of forming his/her own personal views, according to his/her age and maturity, shall have the right to express them freely in all matters affecting him/her either orally, in writing, or through any other lawful means in a manner not contradictory to the Sharia and ethics.
2. Every child is entitled to respect of his/her personal life. Nevertheless the parents or legal representative of the child are entitled to exercise Islamic and supervision over the conduct of the child who shall not be subject of any restrictions other than those imposed in conformity with law and are necessary for the protection of public order, public security, public morals, public health, or the protection of the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.

## **ARTICLE 10**

### **Freedom of Assembly**

Every child shall have the right to form and join any peaceful civilian gathering in accordance with legal and statutory provisions in his / her society and in a way that is compatible with his/her age and does not affect this/her behaviour, health, family or heritage.

## **ARTICLE 11**

### **Upbringing**

1. A sound upbringing is a right of the child and shall be the responsibility of his / her parents or legal guardian, as the case may be, and in which the institutions of the state, within their means, shall assist them.
2. The upbringing of the child shall aim at the following objectives:
  - i. To develop the personality, religious and moral value, and sense of citizenship and Islamic and human solidarity of the child and to instil in him/her a spirit of understanding dialogue, tolerance and friendship among people.
  - ii. To encourage the child to acquire skills and capabilities to face new situations and overcome negative customs, and to grow up grounded in scientific and objective reasoning.

## **ARTICLE 12**

### **Education and Culture**

1. Every child has a right to free compulsory basic education by learning the principles of Islamic education (as well as belief and Shariah according to the situation) and to the provision of the necessary means to develop his / her mental, psychological and physical abilities, to allow him/her to be open to the common standards of human culture.
2. States Parties to present Covenant shall provide:
  - i. Compulsory, free primary education for all children on an equal footing.
  - ii. Free and compulsory secondary education on a progressive basis so that, within ten years, it is made available to all children.
  - iii. Higher education, while observing the capability and interest of each child, in accordance with the education system in each State.
  - iv. The right of every child to wear clothes “compatible with her beliefs” while complying with Islamic Sharia, public etiquette, and modesty.

- v. Effective treatment of the problem of illiteracy, drop-outs and those who miss basic education.
  - vi. Taking care of outstanding and gifted students in all stages of education.
  - vii. Producing and publishing children's books, setting up children's libraries, and making use of the mass media in propagating cultural, social, and artistic material relating to children and encouraging children education.
- 3. For the right of the child approaching puberty to receive proper sex education distinguishing between the lawful and unlawful.
  - 4. The provisions of this Article and Article 11 immediately preceding it shall not be in conflict with the freedom of the Muslim child to joint private educational institutions, provided that such institutions respect the provisions of the Islamic Shariah and that the education given in such institutions observe the rules laid down by the State.

### **ARTICLE 13**

#### **Rest and Activity Times**

- 1. The child is entitled to times for rest and play, and to exercise legitimate activities that are suitable to his/her age during his/her free time.
- 2. The child is entitled to participate in cultural, artistic and social spheres.
- 3. Parents or the one legally responsible for the child, have the right to oversee the child while exercising the activities he desires in accordance with this Article in the framework of the educational, religious and moral controls.

### **ARTICLE 14**

#### **Social Living Standard**

- 1. Every child is entitled to custody and maintenance in order to save him/her from perishing due to his /her inability to preserve and maintain himself/herself.
- 2. State Parties shall recognize the right of every child to benefit from social security in accordance with their national laws.
- 3. State Parties shall be obliged to reduce the prices of services and exempt children from tariffs and taxes.
- 4. Every child entitled to a living standards suitable to his/her mental, psychological, physical, and social development.



5. The State Parties shall guarantee for the child mandatory measures to compel his/her parents or legal guardian under Shariah law to offer him/her support according to their abilities.

## **ARTICLE 15**

### **Child Health**

The child is entitled to physical and psychological care. This shall be realized through:

1. Providing care for the mother since the onset of pregnancy and during natural nursing either by the mother or someone else if the mother is unable to suckle the baby.
2. The right of the child to mitigate some Shariah and judicial rules in favour of his/her legitimate wet-nurse under Shariah law, and to postpone some punishments given against her as well as lessening work assignments of a nursing and pregnant women and reduce their work hours.
3. His/her right to necessary measures to reduce infant and child mortality rates.
4. medical examination for prospective couples in order to ensure the absence or causes of hereditary or contagious diseases which portend danger for the child.
5. The right of a male child to circumcision.
6. Non-interference of both parents or others in medically altering the colour, shape, features, or sex of the foetus except for medical necessities.
7. Providing preventive medical care, disease and malnutrition control, as well as providing the necessary health care for his/her mother for the benefit of the child.
8. The right of the child from the State and society to extend medical information and services for mothers in order to raise awareness and help them improve the health of their children.
9. Guaranteeing the right of the child to be protected from narcotics, intoxicants and other harmful substances as well as from infectious and endemic diseases.

## **ARTICLE 16**

### **Disabled Children and Children with Special Needs**

1. A disabled child or one with special needs, is entitled to receive a special care that guarantees his/her full rights and is commensurate with his/her case and

the conditions of his /her parents or of the one responsible for him/her, as well as with available capabilities;.

2. The objectives of care for a disabled child, or one with special needs are education, rehabilitation and training; providing appropriate mobility means (medical, psychological, social, educational, professional, and entertainment services); to enable him/her to be integrated into society, the services should, as much as possible, be provided free of charge or with nominal fees.

## **ARTICLE 17**

### **Child Protection**

States Parties shall take necessary measures to protect the child from:

1. Illegal use of drugs, intoxicants and harmful substances, or participation in their production, promotion, or trafficking.
2. All forms of torture or inhumane or humiliating treatment in all circumstances, conditions, or his/her smuggling, kidnapping, or trafficking in him / her.
3. All forms of abuse, particularly sexual abuse.
4. Cultural, ideological, information and communication invasion which contradicts the Islamic Shariah or the national interests of state parties.
5. To protect children by not involving them in armed conflicts or wars.

## **ARTICLE 18**

### **Child Labour**

1. No child shall exercise any risk work, or work which obstructs his/her education or which is at the expense of his/her health as well as physical or spiritual growth.
2. Domestic regulations of every State shall fix a minimum working age, as well as working conditions and hours. Sanctions shall be imposed against those who contravene these regulations.

## **ARTICLE 19**

### **Justice**

1. No child shall be deprived of his/her freedom, save in accordance with the law and for a reason able and specific period.
2. A child deprived of his/her freedom shall be treated in a way consistent with dignity, respect for human rights and basic freedoms. Needs of persons of his/her age shall be observed.

3. State Parties to the Covenant shall observe the following:

- (a) A child deprived of his/her freedom shall be separated from adults in special places for delinquent children.
- (b) A child shall be informed immediately and directly about the charges against him/her summoning or apprehension, and his/her parents, guardian or lawyer shall be invited to be present with him/her.
- (c) The child shall be provided with legal and humanitarian assistance where needed including access to a lawyer and an interpreter if necessary.
- (d) Expeditious consideration of the case by a specialized juvenile court, with the possibility of the judgment being contested by a higher court once the child is convicted.
- (e) No child shall be compelled to plead guilty or to offer testimony.
- (f) Punishment shall be considered as a means of reform and care in order to rehabilitate the child and reintegrate him/her into the society.
- (g) A minimum age under which the child may not be tried shall be determined.
- (h) Respect for the child's privacy during all stages of the lawsuit shall be ensured.

## **ARTICLE 20**

### **Parents Responsibility and Protection from Detrimental Practices**

1. Parents or the one legally responsible shall be obliged to provide good education and upbringing for the child.
2. Parents or the one legally responsible and States Parties to the Covenant shall protect the child from practices and traditions which are socially or culturally detrimental or harmful to the health, and from practices which have negative effects on his/her welfare, dignity or growth, as well as those leading to discrimination between children on basis of sex or other grounds in accordance with the regulations and without prejudice to Islamic Shariah.

## **ARTICLE 21**

### **Children Refugees**

States Parties to this Covenant shall ensure, as much as possible, that refugee children, or those assimilated to this status, enjoy the rights provided for in this Covenant within their national legislation.

**ARTICLE 22**  
**Signing, ratification and or accession to the Covenant**

1. The present Covenant shall be open for signature by all Member States of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation.
2. The present Covenant shall be open for ratification and / or accession by all Member States.
3. The instruments of ratification shall be deposited with the Secretary General of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation.

**ARTICLE 23**  
**The Covenant's Entry into force**

1. The present Covenant shall enter into force on the thirtieth day following the date of deposit with the Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation of the twentieth instrument of ratification.
2. For each State acceding to this Covenant, the Covenant shall enter into force on the thirtieth day after the deposit by such State of its instrument of accession.

**ARTICLE 24**  
**Implementation Mechanism of the Covenant**

1. States Parties to the present Covenant agree to establish an Islamic Committee on the Rights of the Child. The Committee shall be composed of the representatives of all the States Parties to the present Covenant and shall meet every two years, starting from the date of entry into force of this Covenant, at the headquarters of the Organization of Islamic Cooper, to examine the progress made in the implementation of this Covenant.
2. The proceedings of the meeting, for which two thirds of the States parties to the present Covenant shall constitute a quorum, shall be governed by the rules of procedure for the meeting of the conferences of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

**ARTICLE 25**  
**Reservation, withdrawal and Amendment**

1. Member States shall have the right to make reservation on some sections of this Covenant or to withdraw their reservation after notifying the Secretary General.

2. Every Member State shall have the right to withdraw from this Covenant whenever they so wish. The withdrawal shall become effective on the thirtieth day following the Secretary General's receipt of the notice.
3. Any state party may present a request to amend this Covenant through a written notice; the amendment will only enter into force with the approval of two-thirds of the OIC Member States.

## **ARTICLE 26**

### **Official Languages**

The present Covenant has been done in the Arabic, English, and French languages, all of which are equally authentic.

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