



DRAFT MINUTES OF THE 2ND MEETING OF OIC OMBUDSMAN ASSOCIATION (OICOA) SUB-COMMITTEE ON WOMEN RIGHTS

<i>Date</i>	<i>18th June 2026</i>
<i>Venue</i>	<i>Federal Ombudsperson Secretariat for Protection Against Harassment (FOSPAH)</i>
<i>Mode</i>	<i>Hybrid</i>
<i>Chaired by</i>	<i>H.E. Ms. Fauzia Viqar</i>
<i>Moderated by</i>	<i>Mr. Mohsin Sheikh (Law Officer (FOSPAH))</i>
<i>Focal Point</i>	<i>Ms. Yumna Jamil, Focal Person, OICOA Sub-Committee on Women's Rights</i>
<i>Minutes Documented by</i>	<i>Ms. Neelam Fatima Shujahuddin Assistant Advisor (OICOA)</i>

Agenda Item No.1 RECITATION OF THE HOLY QURAN

1. The meeting commenced with the recitation from the Holy Quran. The session was formally opened by the moderator, Mr. Mohsin Sheikh, Law Officer at the Federal Ombudsperson Secretariat for Protection Against Harassment (FOSPAH), who extended a warm welcome to all the participants attending the 2nd meeting of the OICOA Subcommittee on Women's Rights.

Agenda Item No.2 WELCOME REMARKS BY THE CHAIR

2. Under this agenda item, the moderator, invited the Chairperson of the OICOA Subcommittee on Women's Rights and Pakistan's Federal Ombudsperson for Protection Against Harassment, Hon'ble Ms. Fauzia Viqar, to deliver her opening remarks.
3. Opening the session, Ms. Viqar formally welcomed the delegates and extended a special acknowledgment to the newly participating observers representing Tanzania and the Mission of Rwanda, led by H.E. Harerimana Fatou. She noted that their inclusion broadens the Subcommittee's mandate and enriches the collective expertise of the forum. Addressing the broader international context, the Chairperson acknowledged recent diplomatic advancements, specifically referencing the Iran-US Memorandum of Understanding, and expressed the Subcommittee's solidarity with the people and women of Iran during a transformative chapter.
4. Transitioning to the Subcommittee's institutional progress, Ms. Viqar apprised the members that since the inaugural meeting, the Secretariat had successfully finalized a comprehensive compendium detailing women-friendly legislation, policies, and grievance redressal mechanisms across participating Member States. She emphasized that this compilation is intended to serve not merely as a reference document, but as a strategic baseline for evaluating collective progress within the OIC region.

5. Observing that the grievances presented by women remain strikingly consistent despite varying national legal frameworks, the Chairperson urged the delegates to adopt a highly operational approach for the day's deliberations. She advised moving beyond broad generalizations to focus strictly on the practical mechanics of Ombudsman institutions, delineating three primary objectives for the session:
 - i. **Analysis of Complaint Trends:** Examining current empirical data on prevalent grievances, specifically targeting areas such as workplace harassment, technology-facilitated violence, and systemic discrimination.
 - ii. **Evaluation of Redress Mechanisms:** Assessing institutional frameworks to ensure responses remain expedited, equitable, and highly accessible to the demographics requiring them most.
 - iii. **Identification of Systemic Deficiencies:** Leveraging daily casework realities to isolate specific legal, policy, and institutional gaps, thereby directing targeted advocacy for legislative reform.
6. Concluding her address, Hon'ble Ms. Fauzia Viqar called upon the sub-committee members to candidly share both their institutional successes and the systemic bottlenecks they encounter. She highlighted that identifying shared operational challenges is vital for fostering effective cross-border collaboration and targeted capacity-building. She urged all participants to ensure these proceedings translate into impactful and constructive outcomes for the women relying on ombudsman institutions for resolution of their grievances.

Agenda Item No.3

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE 1ST MEETING (22-12-2025) AND ADOPTION OF AGENDA

7. The moderator opened the floor for observations or proposed amendments regarding the minutes of the first meeting, held on 22nd December 2025. The participants raised no objections, and the minutes were endorsed as circulated.
8. Hon'ble Ms. Fauzia Viqar acknowledged the endorsement and introduced a proposal to revise the Subcommittee's meeting schedule. She recalled the initial decision taken in the previous meeting to convene quarterly. However, citing ongoing international geo-political developments that have disrupted routine governmental operations worldwide, she suggested that a biannual schedule would be more practical. She then requested feedback from the Members and the OICOA Secretariat on this proposed adjustment.
9. Mr. Almas Ali Jovindah, Executive Secretary of OICOA, took the floor to formally support the Chairperson's recommendation. He stated that a biannual framework aligns effectively with the upcoming OICOA General Assembly scheduled for the end of the year, which will offer an additional venue for the members to convene. Furthermore, he informed the participants that his prior consultations with OICOA Board Members yielded full agreement on this proposal. The OICOA Secretariat, therefore, placed its official endorsement on record.
10. Following this discussion, the moderator invited comments on the circulated agenda for the current session. Receiving no further interventions, the agenda was formally adopted.

DECISION

- a. **Approval of Minutes:** *The minutes of the 1st Meeting of the OICOA Subcommittee on Women's Rights held on 22nd December 2025 were approved without amendment.*
- b. **Meeting Frequency:** *The Subcommittee unanimously agreed to amend its meeting frequency from a quarterly to a biannual schedule.*
- c. **Adoption of Agenda:** *The agenda for the 2nd Meeting of the Subcommittee was adopted as circulated.*

Agenda Item No.4

COMPENDIUM ON WOMEN FRIENDLY MECHANISMS

(An Overview of consolidated compendium on women friendly laws, policies and redress mechanisms in OIC Member States)

11. Proceeding to the fourth agenda item, the moderator invited Ms. Aneesa Zeb (Assistant Registrar – FOSPAH Secretariat), to present a consolidated overview of the comparative compendium on women-friendly laws, policies, and redress mechanisms across OICOA Member States.
12. Ms. Zaib apprised the forum that the compendium serves as a jurisdictional study mapping legislative frameworks, protection mechanisms, and enforcement milestones across eight Member States: Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Benin, Burkina Faso, Pakistan, Senegal, Togo, and Türkiye.
13. She stated that the primary objective of the research was to analyze how statutory texts translate into actionable administrative justice across eight specific thematic areas: Gender-Based Violence, Harmful Practices, Reproductive Health, Economic Empowerment, Education, Political Participation, Digital Rights, and Intersectional Discrimination.
14. Detailing the core findings of the study, Ms. Aneesa Zeb noted that while all examined Member States possess foundational constitutional guarantees of equality and sector-specific legislation, notable differences persist in the scope and practical implementation of these frameworks.
15. To structure the findings, Ms. Aneesa Zeb outlined the key institutional, legal, and political milestones defining the current landscape:
 - i. **Institutional and Legal Milestones:** Türkiye and Pakistan were highlighted for establishing specialized infrastructure. Türkiye operates specialized ŞÖNİM (Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centres) integrated with the KADES emergency response infrastructure. Pakistan has developed a comprehensive legislative framework, anchored by specialized protections provided through the Ombudsperson for Women's Property Rights.
 - ii. **Political Parity and Representation:** Senegal and Togo have implemented innovative regulatory frameworks requiring 50 percent gender parity on electoral candidate lists. Concurrently, Burkina Faso and Benin utilize progressive representation thresholds supported by legislative financial incentive measures.
 - iii. **Socio-Economic Milestones:** Bahrain has structurally equalized legal retirement criteria at age 60 and removed historical bans on women working night shifts. Azerbaijan has standardized high-tier statutory maternity leave alongside advanced digital privacy protections.
16. Ms. Aneesa Zeb then elaborated on the specific thematic pillars examined within the compendium:
 - i. **Gender Responsiveness and Infrastructure:** The study underscored the necessity of transitioning from passive legislation to active infrastructure. In addition to Türkiye's ŞÖNİM and KADES networks, Pakistan utilizes a federal-provincial system led by FOSPAH, supported by the Ministry of Human Rights' 1099 helpline and the Integrated Violence Against Women Center (VAWC) in Punjab. Benin and Burkina Faso operate dedicated ministerial gender units, whereas Senegal and Togo

mandate sector-specific anti-harassment mechanisms overseen by compliance officers. Bahrain and Azerbaijan anchor oversight directly within state judicial structures managed by high-level national councils.

- ii. **Harmful Practices:** West African states have leveraged national penal codes to explicitly criminalize female genital mutilation, applying severe statutory penalties to practitioners and accomplices. Regarding minimum marriage age, Azerbaijan, Benin, and Togo enforce a strict threshold of 18 years. Türkiye sets the standard at 18 with judicial exceptions, while Pakistan enforces 18 in most jurisdictions, with legislative reforms underway in one province where the limit remains 16. Furthermore, Burkina Faso and Benin legally prohibit forced widowhood and levirate marriages, and Pakistan has formally criminalized subnational dispute settlement practices (such as Wani, Swara, and Badl-e-Sulah) that exchange women as compensation.
- iii. **Political Participation:** The compendium identified two primary strategic pathways to parity. The enforceable parity model is utilized by Senegal and Togo (mandating a 50% split backed by financial penalties), Burkina Faso (a 30% quota with vertical list alternation and a 20% campaign funding incentive), and Benin (reserving one female seat per constituency). The reserved seat model is utilized by Pakistan, which structurally guarantees 60 reserved seats in the National Assembly and 17 in the Senate. Azerbaijan, Bahrain, and Türkiye rely strictly on constitutional equality clauses without imposing statutory quotas.
- iv. **Reproductive Health and Maternity Rights:** Statutory maternity leave varies widely, ranging from 60 days in Bahrain to 126 days in Azerbaijan, and 14 to 16 weeks across Benin, Burkina Faso, Senegal, and Türkiye. Pakistan's Maternity and Paternity Act of 2023 grants 180, 120, and 90 days for the first, second, and third child respectively, alongside 30 days of paternity leave. Regarding abortion, Türkiye permits procedures up to 10 weeks (20 weeks for fetal anomalies), and Azerbaijan permits procedures up to 12 weeks (22 weeks on social grounds). Togo's Law 2007-005 guarantees individual reproductive autonomy. All eight states provide subsidized antenatal and postnatal care through state-backed public health infrastructure.
- v. **Economic Empowerment:** Pakistan achieved a legislative milestone with the Women Property Rights Act 2020, granting expedited administrative remedies through the Ombudsperson to bypass civil court delays. Türkiye overhauled its civil code in 2001 to mandate equal asset distribution upon divorce and protect inheritance rights. Seven of the eight states maintain strict constitutional mandates for equal pay. Economic inclusion is further driven by state-backed networks, including the Tamkeen initiative in Bahrain, KOSGEB in Türkiye, the Benazir Income Support Program in Pakistan, and targeted microfinance programs in West Africa.
- vi. **Education and Digital Rights:** All jurisdictions maintain a compulsory education baseline of 9 to 12 years. Türkiye utilizes targeted enrollment campaigns and conditional cash transfers, while Togo's Law 2022-020 explicitly criminalizes school-based sexual violence and establishes a national observatory for education safety. In the digital sector, Pakistan's Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) 2016 criminalizes cyberstalking and the non-consensual distribution of images. Türkiye's Law No. 5651 mandates rapid takedowns for online abusive content, and Benin has strengthened its framework by ratifying the African Union Malabo Convention.
- vii. **Intersectional Discrimination:** Constitutional anti-discrimination laws anchor protections across all examined states. Pakistan's Sindh Act of 2018 extends targeted protection to women, children, transgender persons, and the elderly with disabilities. Social protection and microfinance programs support economically marginalized women in Benin, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Togo, and Pakistan. Gender

protections are integrated with minority rights frameworks in Azerbaijan (and Brazil, as noted in the jurisdictional comparison). All jurisdictions maintain disability-specific legislation complemented by workplace employment quotas.

viii. **Institutional Architecture**: Ms. Aneesa Zeb further categorized the administrative frameworks into four distinct models:

Integrated Model (Türkiye): Built upon provincial ŞÖNİM centers, specialized family courts, and unified law enforcement tracking.

Federal-Provincial Model (Pakistan): Led by FOSPAH and dedicated provincial ombudspersons to fast-track claims, operating alongside executive bodies like the Punjab Women Protection Authority.

Ministerial Model (West Africa): Executed through permanent civil service directors and intra-ministry units.

Council Model (Bahrain & Azerbaijan): Centralized high-level bodies that consolidate policy formulation and enforcement directly under executive authority.

17. Concluding the presentation, Ms. Aneesa Zeb summarized that the emergence of specialized, integrated models represents a critical paradigm shift toward accessible, rapid-response justice, and that the compendium is intended to serve as a practical roadmap for future institutional development across OIC Member States.
18. Following the conclusion of the presentation, the moderator thanked Ms. Aneesa Zaib for her comprehensive overview of the compendium.
19. The Chairperson of the OICOA Sub-committee Hon'ble Ms. Fauzia Viqar opened the floor to the participants. She invited the members to provide additional input, offer observations, or seek any necessary clarifications regarding the compendium's findings.
20. No comments or further questions were raised by the participants at this stage.

Agenda Item No.5 COUNTRY STATEMENTS/PRESENTATIONS

21. Proceeding to the fifth agenda item, the moderator, Mr. Mohsin Sheikh, invited the OICOA Sub-committee Members to deliver their country presentations. He announced that the statements would proceed in alphabetical order, commencing with the Republic of Azerbaijan.
22. The moderator noted that as the session coincided with the National Day of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the representative from Human Rights Commissioner (Ombudsman) of Azerbaijan, Ms. Ayten Tarverdiyeva, would be participating via a pre-recorded video statement.

COUNTRY STATEMENT BY THE OFFICE OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSIONER (OMBUDSMAN) OF AZERBAIJAN

23. In her pre-recorded video address, Ms. Ayten Tarverdiyeva extended her gratitude to the organizers of the second meeting and emphasized that the realization of equality and the enjoyment of fundamental freedoms are critical contingencies for the protection of human rights.
24. Providing an update on Azerbaijan's regulatory advancements, Ms. Tarverdiyeva highlighted a significant legislative milestone achieved in May 2026. She informed the forum that the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan signed a decree approving the Law "On Amendments to the Labour Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan

'On Guarantees of Gender (Men and Women) Equality"'. These amendments specifically targeted and revised Articles 12 and 154 of the national Labour Code.

25. Under the updated statutory framework, employers in Azerbaijan are now legally obligated to pay equal wages to employees performing the same work or different work of equal value, strictly regardless of gender. Ms. Tarverdiyeva elaborated that the legal definition of "equal value of work" is to be determined by the employer by factoring in specific operational criteria, including working conditions, the nature of labor functions, and the tariff-qualification characteristics outlined in the active Unified Tariff-Qualification Reference Books.
26. Transitioning to the operational activities of the Ombudsperson, she noted that the institution continues to extensively investigate complaints concerning labor violations, social security, the right to health, domestic violence, early marriage, and gender-based discrimination. The outcomes of these investigations and the Ombudsperson's subsequent recommendations have been formally integrated into broader state policies, including the National Action Plan on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and the National Action Plan on Gender Equality. Notably, the National Action Plan on Gender Equality for the period of 2026–2028 was officially approved by Presidential decree on 29th December 2025.
27. Ms. Tarverdiyeva further observed that empirical analysis of the applications received by the Ombudsperson indicates that many violations of women's rights stem directly from a lack of legal awareness among the affected demographics. To address this systemic gap, the Ombudsman Office and its regional centers conduct targeted educational events throughout the year. She highlighted the annual declaration of "Human Rights Month" (spanning 18th May to 18th June), initiated by the Ombudsman of Azerbaijan on the eve of the Republic's Human Rights Day. Through this month-long campaign, the Ombudsman formally calls upon state bodies, civil society organizations, and media agencies to organize comprehensive public awareness initiatives focused on women's freedoms, domestic violence prevention, and gender equality.
28. At the end of her video statement, Ms. Tarverdiyeva thanked the OICOA Members for their continued cooperation and enthusiasm towards OICOA Subcommittee on Women Rights and reaffirmed Office of Human Rights Commissioner (Ombudsman) of Azerbaijan's commitment to sustaining a constructive institutional dialogue within the domain of human rights protection.

COUNTRY STATEMENT BY OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN OF BAHRAIN

29. The moderator, Mr. Mohsin Sheikh, invited Ms. Maryam Ahmed Abdulnoor, Chief of Coordination and Follow-Up at the Office of the Ombudsman of the Kingdom of Bahrain, to deliver her country statement.
30. Ms. Maryam Abdulnoor commenced her address by emphasizing that the Kingdom of Bahrain's commitment to gender equality remains fundamentally anchored within its national legislation, comprehensive planning frameworks, and continuous institutional reform initiatives. She informed the participants that since the Subcommittee's inaugural meeting in December 2025, the Kingdom has actively propelled this agenda forward through five critical, interconnected domains: the implementation of the National Plan 2025–2026, targeted legislative reforms, strategic economic empowerment initiatives, the fortification of institutional mechanisms, and the active pursuit of international recognition. Ms. Maryam stated that each of these strategic pillars directly reflects Bahrain's National Action Plan, its binding international commitments under CEDAW, and the inclusive development objectives enshrined within Bahrain Vision 2030.
31. Expanding upon the policy framework, Ms. Abdulnoor provided a detailed exposition of the newly formulated **National Plan for the Advancement of Bahraini Women (2025–2026)**. She highlighted that this comprehensive strategy operates under the central, guiding theme of "*Bahraini Women: Empowerment, Progress, and Leadership*." The Plan carries the highest level of institutional endorsement, having been formally approved by the Supreme Council for

Women (SCW) under the chairpersonship of Her Royal Highness Princess Sabeeka bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa.

32. Ms. Abdulnoor delineated the four foundational objectives driving the execution of the National Plan, for operationalizing this strategic vision:
 - i. **Family Stability:** Preserving core family values while deploying structural support mechanisms to assist women in effectively balancing familial obligations with broader societal and professional roles.
 - ii. **Decision-Making:** Systematically elevating women's active participation and representation across the Kingdom's legislative bodies, executive branches, and leadership echelons.
 - iii. **Economic Participation:** Ensuring equal economic opportunities, proactively promoting female entrepreneurship, and facilitating comprehensive workforce integration.
 - iv. **Quality of Life:** Prioritizing the delivery of specialized social services, environmental integration, and targeted enhancements in health, sports, and housing tailored to the specific needs of women.
33. Ms. Maryam Abdulnoor further noted that these four objectives are systematically supported by five cross-cutting operational pillars: the formulation of targeted policies, the implementation of gender-responsive budgeting, comprehensive awareness and training programs, and rigorous monitoring and evaluation frameworks.
34. Transitioning to specific Legislative and Institutional Measures, Ms. Maryam Abdulnoor anchored Bahrain's progress in its Constitutional and National Charter foundations, which strictly affirm equality among all citizens and prohibit discrimination. Building upon this bedrock, she highlighted recent regulatory advancements designed to fortify women's workplace protections:
 - i. **Decision No. 1 of 2025:** Issued by Her Royal Highness Princess Sabeeka, this mandate established the Committee on Women in Nurseries and Kindergartens to study and systematically improve working conditions for women within early childhood education.
 - ii. **Amendments to Law No. 36/2012:** Revisions to the private sector labor law legally reinforce equal workplace entitlements. These amendments guarantee paid maternity leave, mandate daily childcare hours, and provide absolute legal protection against dismissal on the grounds of marriage or maternity.
 - iii. **Women's Support Offices:** The Ministry of Social Development has strategically decentralized support services by opening dedicated offices across all four of the Kingdom's Governorates, ensuring accessible legal, social, and institutional support for women nationwide.
35. Addressing the domain of Economic Empowerment and Skills Development, Ms. Abdulnoor brought the forum's attention to the *Bahrain Skills & Gender Parity Accelerator*, an initiative formally declared at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in January 2025. Coordinated by the Bahrain Economic Development Board on behalf of both the public and private sectors, the Accelerator's primary goal is to fully close the gender skills gap within high-growth industries through proactive workforce preparation. Priority sectors targeted for female integration include Artificial Intelligence and Digital Transformation, FinTech, Renewable Energy and Space Sciences, Banking, Tourism and Hospitality, and Information and Communications Technology (ICT). Ms. Abdulnoor emphasized that robust legal support measures are concurrently integrated across these sectors to assist women in balancing family responsibilities with their professional trajectories.
36. Discussing Institutional Awards and Recognition Mechanisms, she outlined structural incentives designed to drive national progress. Central to this is the *Princess Sabeeka bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa Award for the Advancement of Bahraini Women*. Recognized as the first award of its kind in scope and goals within the region, it functions to enhance women's

competitiveness as productive economic contributors and incentivizes government agencies, private companies, and civil society organizations to heavily invest in women's training, leadership, and non-discrimination policies. Furthermore, the Kingdom has implemented dedicated gender-responsive budgeting streams financing women's education, health, and social services, complete with built-in monitoring mechanisms. Ms. Abdulnoor also noted that the Supreme Council for Women, celebrating its 24th anniversary in 2025, continues to serve as the definitive national reference proposing laws and monitoring statutory compliance.

37. Ms. Maryam Abdulnoor also presented empirical data regarding Bahrain's International Recognition. She reported that Bahrain gained 12 places globally in the World Economic Forum's *Global Gender Gap Report 2025*, achieving a gender gap score of 68.4% (an increase from 66.6% in 2024). Additionally, Bahrain secured the second position within the Gulf region in the World Bank's *Women, Business and the Law Index*, scoring above the regional MENA average and reflecting tangible progress in economic rights across the working life-cycle.
38. In her closing remarks, Ms. Maryam Abdulnoor reaffirmed the Kingdom of Bahrain's unwavering commitment to advancing women's rights through its comprehensive National Plan, targeted labor reforms, specialized skills accelerators, and institutional incentives. She assured the OICOA Subcommittee on Women Rights that Bahrain stands ready to share its administrative experiences and collaborate closely with OIC Member States to advance gender equality globally.
39. Following the comprehensive statement from the Ombudsman Office of Kingdom of Bahrain, the moderator thanked Ms. Maryam Abdulnoor for her deeply informative presentation.

COUNTRY STATEMENT BY MEDIATOR OF BENIN

40. Following the presentation by the Kingdom of Bahrain, the moderator, Mr. Mohsin Sheikh, invited Ms. Thérèse Hessou Hontonou, representing the Office of the Mediator of the Republic of Benin, to deliver her country statement.
41. Ms. Hontonou stated that it was an honor to present the legislative advancements, institutional mechanisms, and strategic initiatives undertaken by the Republic of Benin to promote gender equality and empower women and girls. She emphasized that Benin's national strategy centers heavily on targeted poverty reduction, comprehensive institutional strengthening, and gender-responsive financing.
42. In her introductory remarks, Ms. Hontonou highlighted several landmark domestic achievements. The first one being the historic appointment of a woman to the high-ranking State position of Vice President of the Republic, a role that is now formally enshrined within the Constitution of Benin. Secondly, the systematic revision of the national Electoral Code to ensure improved representation of women within the national Parliament, thirdly, the strategic strengthening of the mandate of the National Institute for Women to facilitate a more effective response to Gender-Based Violence (GBV), and lastly, the reinforcement of the domestic legislative framework combatting GBV through the formal adoption of three specific laws.
43. Ms. Hontonou further apprised the participants that Benin's domestic commitments, adopted measures, and implemented actions are strictly aligned with and informed by its obligations under major international and regional conventions, including:
 - i. *The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocol*
 - ii. *The Beijing Platform for Action.*
 - iii. *United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325.*
 - iv. *The Millennium Development Goals.*
 - v. *The Solemn Declaration of African Heads of State and Government on Gender Equality in Africa.*

- vi. *The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and its Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa.*
 - vii. *The Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages.*
 - viii. *The Convention against Discrimination in Education.*
 - ix. *Convention No. 100 concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value (ratified in May 1968).*
 - x. *The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.*
44. Transitioning to specific state interventions, Ms. Hontonou listed a suite of legislative measures enacted by Republic of Benin to protect women. She highlighted a series of pivotal laws, notably *Law No. 2021-11 of 20th December 2021* on special measures for the repression of offences committed on the basis of a person's sex and the protection of women in the Republic of Benin; *Law No. 2021-12 of 20th December 2021* amending and supplementing *Law No. 2003-04 of 3rd March 2003* relating to sexual and reproductive health; and *Law No. 2021-13 of 20th December 2021* amending and supplementing *Law No. 2002-07 of 24th August 2004* establishing the Code of Persons and the Family in the Republic of Benin. She also referenced foundational legislation including *Law No. 2003-03 of 3rd March 2003* prohibiting and punishing the practice of female genital mutilation in the Republic of Benin; *Law No. 2003-04 of 3rd March 2003* on sexual and reproductive health in the Republic of Benin; *Law No. 2002-07 of 24th August 2004* establishing the Code of Persons and the Family; *Law No. 2005-31 of 5th April 2006* on the prevention, treatment and control of HIV/AIDS in the Republic of Benin; *Law No. 2006-19 of 5th September 2006* on the repression of sexual harassment and the protection of victims in the Republic of Benin; *Law No. 2011-06 of 9th January 2012* on the prevention and punishment of violence against women; and *Law No. 2013-01* establishing the Land and State Property Code in the Republic of Benin, which sets out the fundamental rules and principles governing land tenure and state property administration.
45. To execute these legal frameworks, Benin has cultivated robust administrative infrastructure. This evolution includes the establishment in 1998 of a Ministry responsible for the promotion of women, followed by the establishment in 2006 of a Ministry of Microfinance, Entrepreneurship and Employment of Youth and Women, dedicated to providing microcredit and promoting entrepreneurship. The institutional architecture was further strengthened by the establishment in 2009 of the National Institute for the Promotion of Women, tasked with conducting studies and research on women's issues; the creation in 2007 of gender focal points and gender focal units within ministries, institutions and municipalities to ensure gender mainstreaming in policies, programmes and projects; and the establishment in 2014 of the National Council for the Promotion of Gender Equity and Equality. Additionally, the State has expanded support mechanisms by establishing girls' secondary schools in the various departments of the country; creating in 2010 support and listening services for victims of gender-based violence within the country's 85 Social Promotion Centres; and, with the support of UNDP, establishing business promotion centres, including one specifically dedicated to women, the Women Business Promotion Center, to support their entrepreneurial activities.
46. Ms. Hontonou outlined the strategic frameworks guiding these actions, such as the adoption in 2009 of the National Gender Promotion Policy and its Action Plan; the development in 2010 of an Action Plan to Combat Gender-Based Violence; the integration in 2013 of gender considerations into the preparation of the State's General Budget Economic Orientation Framework; and the development in 2014 of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the integrated care and support of victims of gender-based violence. These strategies are operationalized through vital social initiatives,

including the progressive introduction of free education through the exemption of school fees for all children in primary education and for girls in the first cycle of secondary education. The government also provides support covering one-third of school fees for girls enrolled in technical education programmes at schools, colleges and universities, awards scholarships to deserving girls at various levels of education, ensures free caesarean section services, and drives efforts to combat violence against women and girls through the dissemination of laws protecting women across all municipalities.

47. Addressing economic empowerment, Ms. Hontonou noted the successful implementation of a microcredit programme for the poorest segments of society, of which more than 98 percent of beneficiaries are women. Furthermore, the Rural Agricultural Activities Support Fund (FAAR) benefited 1,541 individuals, including 926 women, representing 60 percent of beneficiaries between 2010 and 2013. The Government also implemented a programme providing support and work equipment to women's groups and women-led associations involved in processing products from the primary sector, benefiting approximately 425 groups, while executing a strategy to strengthen women's capacities through functional literacy, management training and income-generating activity modules tailored to identified needs.
48. In conclusion of her statement, Ms. Hontonou emphasized that this list of initiatives aimed at promoting women's rights and gender equality is not exhaustive. She acknowledged the critical, ongoing initiatives being implemented by Civil Society Organizations and Technical and Financial Partners, noting that sectoral ministries provide strategic guidance and ensure the documentation and capitalization of these initiatives as part of the preparation of reports on the promotion of women and gender equality.

COUNTRY STATEMENT BY COUNCIL OF COMMITTEES OF BURKINA FASO

49. Following the presentation by the Republic of Benin, the moderator, Mr. Mohsin Sheikh, invited Mr. Abdul Kader Konfe, representing the National Council of Committees of Burkina Faso, to deliver his country statement. However, the representative was not available to offer comments at that time.

COUNTRY STATEMENT BY FEDERAL OMBUDSPERSON FOR PROTECTION AGAINST HARASSMENT (FOSPAH)

50. The moderator then invited Ms. Shaza Kaleem Usmani, Assistant Registrar at the Federal Ombudsperson Secretariat for Protection Against Harassment (FOSPAH), to deliver the presentation/statement for FOSPAH Secretariat.
51. Ms. Usmani commenced her presentation by providing an assessment of Pakistan's progress since the Subcommittee's inaugural meeting in December 2025. She stated that Pakistan's advancement in women's rights reflects over sixteen years of continuous institutional and legislative development, originating from the enactment of the 2010 Harassment Act. She emphasized that the current framework is supported by a coordinated institutional ecosystem comprising FOSPAH, provincial ombudspersons, the National Commission on the Status of Women, and specialized gender-based violence forces, all designed to ensure a clear pathway to justice for survivors.
52. Detailing recent legislative and policy reforms, Ms. Usmani highlighted the enactment of the Domestic Violence Prevention and Protection Act of 2026, which formally provides legal safeguards against physical, emotional, psychological, and economic abuse. She also noted the passage of the Child Marriage Prohibition Act of 2026 and related provincial assembly resolutions, alongside specific amendments to the criminal code intended to expedite gender-based violence prosecutions and center them around the survivor. In the realm of economic empowerment, she reported that millions of women are gaining direct access to bank accounts and digital financial services. At the

provincial level, this is supplemented by interest-free loans, business incubation programs, and e-bike mobility schemes. Furthermore, Ms. Usmani highlighted Pakistan's implementation of gender-responsive budgeting at both the federal and provincial levels, citing the recent abolition of the "pink tax" on menstrual products as a key fiscal reform.

53. Transitioning to institutional outreach, Ms. Shaza Kaleem Usmani shed light on FOSPAH's proactive awareness campaigns. She provided empirical data indicating that during the 16 Days of Activism in 2025, FOSPAH conducted 55 awareness sessions across key national institutions. Since the first Subcommittee meeting, the institution has executed an additional 57 sessions and 10 specialized trainings focusing on public awareness, employee rights, and institutional compliance. She also noted the successful deployment of FOSPAH's internship program, which generated over one million digital interactions and received more than 9,000 applications.
54. Ms. Usmani presented an analysis of recent complaint trends managed by FOSPAH in its quasi-judicial capacity. In 2025, the Secretariat received 727 total complaints, comprising 496 filed by women and 231 by men. In the current year of 2026, 312 complaints have already been registered, with 191 filed by women. Regarding the enforcement of property rights, FOSPAH has processed 1,299 complaints to date, including 136 explicit cases concerning the denial of inheritance rights. Ms. Usmani interpreted these rising figures not merely as an increase in violations, but as a direct indicator of enhanced legal awareness and growing public confidence in the ombudsperson system.
55. Addressing systemic gaps and emerging challenges, Ms. Usmani candidly identified critical areas requiring urgent legislative attention in Pakistan. She pointed to the absence of matrimonial property legislation, the lack of criminalization of marital rape, and inadequate protections against forced coercions. Furthermore, she raised concerns regarding the rapid escalation of technology-facilitated gender-based violence, including deepfakes and AI-generated abuse, noting that these technological threats are outpacing existing legal frameworks. She also highlighted the disproportionate vulnerabilities women face concerning climate-related disasters and the lack of social security coverage for millions of women operating within the informal economic sector.
56. In her concluding remarks, on behalf of FOSPAH, Ms. Usmani proposed specific avenues for collaboration and strategic recommendations for OICOA Member States. She called for enhanced knowledge exchange, joint capacity-building programs, and collaborative research to develop regional solutions to emerging technological and environmental challenges. Finally, she outlined three core priorities for the network: the robust implementation of existing laws backed by adequate gender-responsive budgeting; the urgent resolution of remaining legislative gaps, particularly concerning human rights and domestic protections; and the deepening of regional cooperation through bilateral data sharing and institutional partnerships.

COUNTRY STATEMENT BY MEDIATOR OF SENEGAL

57. Following the presentation by FOSPAH, the moderator, Mr. Mohsin Sheikh, invited the representative from Mediator of Senegal, Ms. Yaye Fatou Gueye Gassama, to deliver her country statement. However, it was noted that she was not available to take the floor at that time.

COUNTRY STATEMENT BY MEDIATOR OF TOGOLESE

Following the call for the Republic of Senegal, the moderator, Mr. Mohsin Sheikh, invited the representative of the Mediator of the Togolese Republic to deliver the country statement.

58. The representative presented an overview of the mechanisms and initiatives favorable to women undertaken by Togo since the inaugural meeting of the Subcommittee. She

informed the forum that Togo's ongoing commitment to women's rights and gender equality was formally recognized by the World Bank Group in its *Women, Business and the Law 2026* report, published on 24th February 2026. Evaluating the legal and institutional frameworks related to women's economic rights across 190 economies, the report places Togo among the top-performing nations on the continent. With an overall score of 79.33 out of 100, the country ranks second in Africa. The representative highlighted that Togo achieved a perfect legal score of 100 in the domains of remuneration, marriage, property rights, and retirement, reflecting a firmly anchored formal equality within national statutory texts. Furthermore, she noted that the country surpasses the Sub-Saharan African average concerning parental rights and entrepreneurship.

59. Transitioning to recent legislative milestones, the representative apprised the participants that on 15th May 2026, the national deputies unanimously adopted a bill authorizing the ratification of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights relating to the rights of persons with disabilities in Africa. She outlined that this Protocol enshrines fundamental principles including non-discrimination, equality before the law, full accessibility and inclusion, and active participation in political, social, cultural, and sports life. The ratification obligates the State to adopt targeted legislative, administrative, institutional, and budgetary measures to ensure the effective implementation of these rights. The representative emphasized that while the charter possesses a general scope, it is particularly advantageous for women within the Togolese cultural context, recognizing that women with disabilities routinely encounter compounded socio-professional challenges.
60. Turning to institutional and financial governance, the representative detailed the adoption of a formal legal framework for gender-sensitive budgeting (GSB). She stated that Togo has formalized an organizational structure dedicated to GSB, defining clear strategies to ensure that national budget management accounts for the specific needs of both women and men. This systemic approach was institutionalized through Inter-ministerial Order No. 007/2026/MBF/MSGFPE, enacted on 11th May 2026.
61. Concurrently, she informed the forum that through Inter-ministerial Order No. 2026/MFB/MSGFPA, issued on the same date, the government designated a national focal point supported by a core group of specialized experts to coordinate GSB initiatives. This body is strictly tasked with ensuring the effective execution of GSB principles, delivering ongoing training, and assisting ministries and institutions in integrating gender considerations into all stages of the budgeting process. The representative concluded her statement by affirming that these initiatives are designed to improve the transparency and efficiency of public spending while solidifying gender equality as a primary fixture in Togo's national development policies.

COUNTRY STATEMENT BY OMBUDSMAN INSTITUTION OF TURKIYE

62. Following the statement from the Mediator of Togolese Republic, the moderator proceeded to the country statement from the Ombudsman Institution of Türkiye.
63. Due to technical difficulties experienced at their end, the statement of Ms. Guniz Ates (Representative for Ombudsman of Türkiye) was submitted via the virtual meeting's text interface and was formally read into the record by Ms. Aneesa Zaib.
64. In the written statement, the representative conveyed sincere appreciation on behalf of the Ombudsman Institution of Türkiye for the comparative compendium, characterizing it as a highly comprehensive document that provides valuable insights into the regional advancement of women's rights. She extended formal gratitude to the FOSPAH Secretariat and the Chairperson of OICOA Subcommittee on Women Rights, H.E. Fauzia Viqar, for their dedicated efforts in coordinating and finalizing the study.

65. The representative reaffirmed Türkiye's prioritization of protecting women's rights and ensuring equitable access to public services. She noted that the Ombudsman Institution operates with a dedicated Ombudsperson specifically mandated to oversee women's rights issues, ensuring focused administrative attention on pertinent complaints and systemic challenges. In this capacity, the Institution continuously monitors grievance trends and conducts active on-site inspections of state facilities providing protection and support services, most notably the Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centers (ŞÖNİM). These field engagements enable the Institution to identify administrative gaps, formulate evidence-based recommendations, and contribute directly to the targeted improvement of public service delivery.
66. Concluding the statement, the representative of Ombudsman Institution of Türkiye apprised the participants of the meeting that the Ombudsman had prepared and issued a special report on the prevention of violence against women on 25th November. This report was formulated following extensive field visits to ŞÖNİM facilities, women's shelters, and relevant state institutions, alongside direct consultations with affected women. The resulting findings culminated in a series of strategic recommendations aimed strictly at strengthening inter-agency coordination, optimizing service delivery, and enhancing the broader protective mechanisms for women across the national framework.

COUNTRY STATEMENT BY PAKISTAN'S PROVINCIAL OMBUDSMAN OF PUNJAB

67. Following the statement from Türkiye, the moderator invited Mr. Arif Anwar Baloch, Advisor (Inspection and Monitoring) at the Office of the Provincial Ombudsman of Punjab, to address the forum.
68. Mr. Baloch informed the participants that a comprehensive document detailing recent provincial legislative developments would be formally circulated to the OICOA Subcommittee Members via FOSPAH Secretariat after this meeting, and proceeded to provide a verbal summary of its core components.
69. He centered his presentation on the legal advancements fortifying the Punjab Child Marriage Ordinance 2026. The primary legislative milestone discussed was the statutory elevation of the minimum age of marriage from 16 to 18 years for both genders. Mr. Baloch articulated the multi-dimensional rationale behind this reform, noting its dual focus on safeguarding the health of young girls and ensuring uninterrupted access to education. By securing the minimum age at 18, the legislation guarantees that girls have the opportunity to complete their intermediate education, thereby equipping them to make informed, independent decisions regarding their futures.
70. Further outlining the statutory features, Mr. Baloch confirmed that this age standardization is strictly aligned with Article 25 of the Constitution of Pakistan, pertaining to equality for all citizens. To ensure robust enforcement, the updated legal framework categorically designates the offense of child marriage as non-bailable. Additionally, a strict procedural safeguard has been introduced stipulating that marriage registration cannot be legally executed unless both the bride and groom produce official birth registration certificates. Mr. Baloch concluded his statement by giving a provincial policy recommendation urging the Provincial Government of Punjab – Pakistan, to introduce financial incentives and assistance programs to support the education of the girl child till adulthood.
71. Following the conclusion of Mr. Baloch's statement, Chairperson of the OICOA Subcommittee, H.E. Ms. Fauzia Viqar took the floor to formally commend the Provincial Ombudsman of Punjab for prioritizing the gender sensitization of its internal workforce. She noted the office's proactive initiative in commissioning FOSPAH to execute

comprehensive training programs for its entire provincial staff. The Chairperson characterized this undertaking as an excellent model of institutional accountability, emphasizing the necessity of solidifying internal frameworks for maximum output. In closing, she extended her congratulations to Mr. Baloch and the Provincial Ombudsman of Punjab for spearheading such initiatives and for their steadfast contributions to the broader mandate of the OICOA Subcommittee.

COUNTRY STATEMENT BY PAKISTAN'S PROVINCIAL OMBUDSMAN OF KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA

72. Following the presentation from the Provincial Ombudsman of Punjab, the moderator invited Ms. Shabana Gul, Director at the Office of the Ombudsman for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, to deliver her statement. Owing to technical difficulties preventing her virtual participation, her statement was displayed to the forum and formally read into the record by Ms. Shaza Kaleem Usmani (Assistant Registrar – FOSPAH).
73. The statement provided an overview of the principal statutory frameworks enacted within the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to protect and advance women's rights. The legislative measures presented included the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Enforcement of Women Property Rights Act of 2020, which strictly secures women's ownership and inheritance rights, and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Commission on the Status of Women Act of 2016, alongside its recent 2025 amendment, which formally establishes and governs the provincial Commission. Furthermore, the statement detailed the provincial amendment to the Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act of 2010, as well as the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Domestic Violence against Women (Prevention and Protection) Act of 2021, which provides comprehensive relief and remedies for individuals facing domestic abuse.
74. Additionally, Ms. Shazia Gul's statement highlighted that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province operates a dedicated Ombudsperson office exclusively mandated to address women-related issues, specifically focusing on the resolution of workplace harassment cases and the enforcement of women's inheritance rights.
75. Following the statement of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ombudsman, H.E. Ms. Fauzia Viqar directed her team at FOSPAH to formally issue an invitation to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ombudsperson office addressed to KPK Ombudsperson H.E. Ms. Rubab Mehdi to ensure their inclusion in the initiatives of the OICOA Subcommittee on Women's Rights.

COUNTRY STATEMENT BY GENERAL INSPECTION ORGANIZATION OF IRAN

76. Following the presentation from the Ombudsman of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the moderator informed the participants that Dr. Mansour Agha Mohammadi, Head of International Affairs at the General Inspection Organization (GIO) of the Islamic Republic of Iran, was unable to join the session as a special observer due to technical difficulties concerning internet connectivity.
77. The moderator then requested the Chairperson, H.E. Ms. Fauzia Viqar, to formally acknowledge a communication received from the GIO. Taking the floor, H.E. Ms. Viqar placed on record the message transmitted by Dr. Agha Mohammadi, in which he extended his sincere appreciation for the dedicated efforts and substantive work of the Subcommittee.
78. Dr. Agha Mohammadi also extended his congratulations to the OICOA Subcommittee Members for their collective progress and commended the successful compilation of the comprehensive comparative compendium, while acknowledging its vital significance as a collaborative resource that has now been formally circulated among all OICOA Member States.

REMARKS BY SPECIAL OBSERVERS FROM TAX OMBUDSMAN SERVICE OF TANZANIA

79. Following the acknowledgment of the correspondence from the GIO Iran, the moderator invited comments from the special observers representing the Tax Ombudsman of Tanzania, Advocate Hawa Songoro and Ms. Anipher Kabapele.
80. No comments were received.

ADDRESS BY HIGH COMMISSIONER OF RWANDA – H.E. HARERIMANA FATOU

81. The moderator invited the Special Observer, H.E. Harerimana Fatou, High Commissioner of Rwanda to Pakistan, to deliver her remarks.
82. Ms. Fatou commenced her address by thanking the Chairperson and Federal Ombudsperson for Protection Against Harassment, H.E. Fauzia Viqar, for the invitation to participate in the second meeting of the OICOA sub-committee on Women Rights. She commended the Government of Pakistan and FOSPAH for their tangible progress in advancing women's empowerment. Drawing on her travels across Pakistan (including the the provinces of Punjab and Sindh), since assuming her diplomatic post in 2024, she noted a visible and highly encouraging increase in female participation, particularly among young women, across both the public sector and private enterprises.
83. Transitioning to the Rwandan experience, Ms. Fatou emphasized that gender equality in her country is not a subject of debate but a strict constitutional mandate. She apprised the forum that Rwanda leads globally with 64 percent female representation in its parliament, a legislative makeup that reflects its national demographics, where women constitute 54 percent of the population. She detailed that the Rwandan Constitution guarantees dedicated parliamentary seats not only for women but also explicitly for youth and persons with disabilities. This institutionalized inclusivity extends throughout the state apparatus, evidenced by high female representation in diplomatic missions (ranging from 40 to 60 percent), the defense sector, and law enforcement. Furthermore, she noted that critical constitutional offices, including the Federal Ombudsman of Rwanda, the Chief Justice of Rwanda, and the head of the National Assembly of Rwanda, are currently held by women.
84. Directing the meeting's attention to financial governance, the High Commissioner of Rwanda emphasized the necessity of gender-responsive budgeting. She informed the participants that Rwanda mandates gender budgeting across all administrative tiers, extending from local village councils up to the central government. This systemic approach ensures structural financial allocations for education and women's empowerment initiatives. Addressing broader regional challenges, she identified persistent educational barriers for young girls in several African nations, drawing on her engagements in Senegal and Nigeria. She urged OICOA to play a proactive role in assisting Member States to dismantle these systemic barriers.
85. In her concluding remarks, H.E. Harerimana Fatou invited the Chairperson of OICOA Sub-committee and its Members to visit Rwanda. She proposed this as an opportunity for institutional knowledge exchange regarding the sustainable development strategies and gender-inclusive reforms implemented by the country since the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.
86. The moderator expressed appreciation for the High Commissioner's encouraging address and concluded Agenda Item No.5

Agenda Item No.6 DISCUSSION

87. Following the conclusion of the country statements, the floor was formally opened for comments, observations, inquiries, and strategic recommendations regarding the comparative compendium and areas for future institutional collaboration.
88. The Chairperson, H.E. Ms. Fauzia Viqar, raised an inquiry addressed to Ms. Maryam Ahmed Abdulnoor, representing the Ombudsman of the Kingdom of Bahrain, concerning the artificial intelligence and digital transformation initiatives highlighted in Bahrain's country statement. The Chairperson observed that artificial intelligence has become an operational reality upon which modern institutions are increasingly dependent to meet their workflow requirements. Given the sensitive nature of administrative data, she requested further elaboration on how Bahrain is navigating the associated confidentiality and security implications.
89. Ms. Abdulnoor clarified that the technological advancements referenced represented a macro-level national perspective, noting that the specific role of the Ombudsman office of Bahrain remains limited within that domain at present. She remarked that the institutional architecture revolving artificial intelligence is being developed in coordination with the Information & eGovernment Authority of Bahrain, which possesses the requisite facilities and technical services. She explained that Bahrain is currently in the process of building a content-specific artificial intelligence framework, emphasizing that addressing data security and confidentiality constraints remains the principal operational focus.
90. The Chairperson subsequently directed a second inquiry to the representative of Mediator of Togolese. She also congratulated to Togo for ranking second in Africa within the World Bank Group's *Women, Business and the Law* report. Acknowledging this as a significant benchmark from which OIC Member States can learn, the Chairperson requested the representative to provide additional insights regarding national developments in marital property laws and recent retirement initiatives, if any.
91. The representative of Mediator of Togo clarified that national statutory frameworks enforce absolute equality between men and women, ensuring a total absence of legal discrimination after marriage. Within the marital structure, both partners possess identical parental authority, and national law does not designate the husband as the head of the family. The representative emphasized that this strict non-discrimination remains consistent regarding legal rights following divorce or widowhood, and the same equal standards apply across all statutory regulations governing employment and retirement.

Agenda Item No.7

FUTURE STEPS & THE NEXT MEETING

92. The moderator introduced the agenda item and invited the Chairperson and sub-committee members to submit strategic recommendations for future institutional collaboration, identify regional priority areas, and discuss preliminary dates/arrangements for the 3rd session of the OICOA Subcommittee on Women Rights.
93. The Chairperson, H.E. Ms. Fauzia Viqar, outlined four primary recommendations for the Subcommittee's future roadmap, noting that these initiatives would subsequently be finalized in coordination with all Members:
- i. ***Collective Advocacy Initiatives:*** *Based on the systemic gaps and institutional challenges identified within the newly compiled compendium, the Chairperson proposed selecting specific areas for joint advocacy. She informed the participants that the FOSPAH Secretariat would actively correspond with all committee members to collect feedback and define these specific targeted measures.*

- ii. **Capacity Building and Institutional Training:** Member States were requested to identify their internal organizational requirements for capacity building and specialized training. The Chairperson requested that members communicate their priority areas to the Secretariat within two weeks, and further encouraged institutions to volunteer qualified trainers and specialized modules to assist in program formulation.
 - iii. **Subcommittee Digital Portal:** Attention was drawn to the dedicated OICOA Subcommittee portal established on the official FOSPAH website, which serves as a centralized repository for all relevant documentation. The Chairperson requested that members review the platform and provide additional institutional data to expand and update the portal.
 - iv. **Finalization of the Comparative Compendium:** Acknowledging the collaborative efforts already invested in the compendium, the Chairperson invited the subcommittee members to submit any outstanding updates or country-specific data. She requested that these entries be sent within one week to enable the FOSPAH Secretariat to finalize the document for official publication on the website.
94. Concluding her remarks, the Chairperson proposed scheduling the 3rd meeting of the Subcommittee for either 2nd December or 3rd December 2026. She requested the Members to review their institutional calendars and convey their availability in writing to lock in the dates.
95. The Chairperson invited the Executive Secretary of OIC Ombudsman Association, Mr. Almas Ali Jovindah, to offer his perspective on the proposed timeline and joint initiatives.
96. Mr. Jovindah expressed the OICOA Secretariat's complete agreement with the proposed December dates. He informed that the timeline fits well into the organizational calendar, as the OICOA has an upcoming 13th Board Meeting scheduled prior to those dates, followed by the 5th General Assembly planned for the first quarter of 2027.
97. Regarding the capacity-building agenda, the Executive Secretary announced that the OICOA Secretariat is also currently structuring a comprehensive training framework. He emphasized the necessity of maximum institutional participation and requested detailed input from Member States to enrich the plan presented by the Chairperson.
98. He further indicated that the OICOA Secretariat's training programs routinely extend beyond the core OIC mandate to include representatives from the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI), the Asian Ombudsman Association (AOA), and European ombudsman offices. Mr. Jovindah observed that this remains a distinct area where minimal work has historically been conducted among ombudsman institutions globally. He emphasized that the progress and documentation generated by the Subcommittee must be widely disseminated to benefit other interested bodies, concluding with the expectation that these training initiatives would yield positive results for ombudsman institutions both within and outside the OIC region.

Agenda Item No.8

ADDRESS BY EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OICOA, MR. ALMAS ALI JOVINDAH

99. The moderator invited Mr. Almas Ali Jovindah, Executive Secretary of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Ombudsman Association (OICOA), to deliver his address.
100. At the outset of his remarks, the Executive Secretary extended formal appreciation to H.E. Harerimana Fatou, High Commissioner of Rwanda to Pakistan, and thanked her for attending the session, despite her demanding schedule. He expressed profound

admiration for Rwanda's governance metrics, particularly regarding its leadership in female parliamentary representation as an exemplary baseline for gender inclusivity.

101. Mr. Jovindah recalled the conceptual origin of the OICOA Sub-committee on Women Rights, and paid tribute to the strategic vision of the Chairperson, H.E. Ms. Fauzia Viqar during the 4th OICOA General Assembly held in Tehran in May 2025, which led to the formation of this subcommittee.
102. He commended the materialization of that vision in the newly finalized *Comparative Compendium of Women Friendly Laws & Institutions*, recognizing the exhaustive research executed by the specialized secretariat team at FOSPAH. He further recorded OICOA's gratitude to the participating Member States, namely Türkiye, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Benin, Burkina Faso, Pakistan, Senegal, and Togo, for submitting their respective statutory frameworks to international peer evaluation.
103. Analyzing the empirical data compiled within the compendium, the Executive Secretary highlighted several national legislative models that offer advanced templates for administrative justice. He commended the Republic of Türkiye for architectural innovation in civilian protection by seamlessly combining the physical infrastructure of the ŞÖNİM Violence Prevention Centers with the GPS-integrated KADES mobile application, effectively converting digital capabilities into immediate physical security. He also recognized the Republic of Azerbaijan for executing high-precision administrative interventions against systemic demographic and cultural vulnerabilities, specifically through its dedicated Action Plan for the Prevention of Sex Selection before Birth and the stringent criminalization of bride kidnapping with statutory penalties ranging from five to ten years of imprisonment. Furthermore, he cited the Republic of Senegal and the Togolese Republic as benchmark models for the enforceability of political representation, observing that Senegal's Law on Parity and Togo's Electoral Code move past mere policy encouragement by mandating an absolute 50 percent gender balance on all candidate lists, backed by the severe administrative penalty of outright list invalidation for non-compliance.
104. Mr. Jovindah also praised Benin, Burkina Faso, Senegal, and Togo for maintaining a synchronized legislative front against Female Genital Mutilation. He highlighted Togo's mandatory statutory reporting requirements, which legally engage the broader community within the state's protective framework, thereby removing cultural immunity and transforming vulnerable protection into a shared civic obligation. Turning to the institutional initiatives of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Mr. Jovindah noted that the Enforcement of Women's Property Rights Act of 2020 effectively bridges the gap between recognized and realized rights by granting the Ombudsperson clear statutory jurisdiction to resolve economic deprivation cases within an expedited 90-day window. This framework successfully bypasses chronic judicial gridlock to deliver immediate economic justice, operating in tandem with the Anti-Women Practices Act to firmly assert state legal primacy over harmful customary traditions.
105. In outlining future operations, Mr. Almas Ali Jovindah affirmed the OICOA Secretariat's deep investment in the OICOA Sub-Committee's upcoming Plan of Action under the chairpersonship of H.E. Ms. Fauzia Viqar, anticipating that it will serve as a rigorous operational blueprint to drive systemic, cross-border impact across the region. He reminded the participants that jurisprudence in isolation remains silent, as any statute, regardless of its drafting or debate, is merely a promise on paper until the machinery of the state gives it a voice and independent oversight bodies provide necessary enforcement teeth. As custodians of that vigilance, Mr. Jovindah concluded that the ultimate measure of institutional success will not reside in the compilation of compendiums or assembly rhetoric, but rather in effectively narrowing the variance between proclaimed statutory rights and the lived, daily realities of the women relying upon the ombudsman system.

Agenda Item No.9
ANY OTHER BUSINESS

106. Under this agenda item, the moderator opened the floor to inquire whether any member wished to raise any additional matter. No further issues, comments, or proposals were brought forward by the members for consideration.

Agenda Item No.10
CONCLUDING REMARKS BY H.E. FAUZIA VIQAR

107. Under this final agenda item, the moderator invited H.E. Ms. Fauzia Viqar, Chairperson of the OICOA Subcommittee on Women's Rights, to deliver the concluding remarks for the session.

108. The Chairperson extended her gratitude to all members of the OICOA Subcommittee and the special observers for their substantive participation throughout the meeting. She offered special thanks to H.E. Harerimana Fatou, High Commissioner of Rwanda to Pakistan, for allocating her valuable time to the session, and acknowledged the delegation from the Tax Ombudsman Service of Tanzania for their presence and support.

109. H.E. Ms. Fauzia Viqar also expressed her sincere hope that the day's proceedings and the ongoing initiatives of the Subcommittee would successfully drive the prioritization of women's empowerment and the systematic removal of marginalization across Member States, the OICOA, and the broader OIC region. She underscored that it remains the collective responsibility of independent oversight institutions to prioritize vulnerable and marginalized populations, emphasizing that the Subcommittee's framework must translate into clear operational results rather than remaining confined to conceptual dialogue.

110. Acknowledging the extensive analytical and operational preparation underlying the preparation of the compendium and arranging today's online meeting, the Chairperson commended her team at FOSPAH for their tireless efforts. She noted that as a relatively small organization, the young professionals at FOSPAH executed a substantial volume of work encompassing country statements, translation management, and complex administrative logistics. She invited the participants to join her in a round of applause to recognize their efforts and success.

111. Furthermore, she expressed appreciation for the sustained institutional support received from the OICOA Secretariat and the Office of the Federal Tax Ombudsman, extending specific thanks to the Executive Secretary, Mr. Almas Ali Jovindah, and Assistant Advisor OICOA, Ms. Neelam Fatima Shujahuddin, for their rigorous coordination.

112. In her final operational directive, the Chairperson urged all participating institutions to provide timely inputs for identifying targeted areas of collective advocacy. She further requested the immediate submission of recommended training topics to ensure that future capacity-building interactions remain meaningful, ultimately driving collective efforts toward narrowing enforcement gaps and achieving robust gender parity.

113. Following these directives, the Chairperson, H.E. Ms. Fauzia Viqar formally concluded her address, thanking the participants for a highly productive session, whereupon the second meeting of the OICOA Subcommittee on Women's Rights was officially adjourned.

