

## *POSITION PAPER*

**Delegate:** Miray Soysal

**Country:** Qatar

**Committee:** UNWOMEN

**Agenda Item:** Promoting possible regulations against gender-based discrimination in work life.



The state of Qatar has made giant, fundamental strides in enhancing the status of women and promoting gender equality since the time of its first report on women, which was presented at the World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. From 1995 to 2003, the country's legislation has been extensively amended. Over the past five years, Qatar has witnessed three significant developments that have substantially strengthened the role of women in its society. Firstly, in December 1998, the establishment of institutional mechanisms such as the Supreme Council for Family Affairs and its subsidiary, the Women's Affairs Committee, directly impacted women's issues. This council took over the responsibility for women's affairs from the Women's Directorate within the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs. Previously, the ministry had devised a national plan aimed at advancing women's status in Qatar, aligning with the objectives outlined in the Beijing Declaration and its accompanying Platform for Action. This plan, supported politically, led to notable progress in education, health, and employment for women. One of its objectives focused on establishing and empowering government agencies and civil society institutions working for women's advancement, with women themselves assuming responsibility for these agencies.

The second significant development has been the increased representation of women in leadership positions compared to previous years. For instance, the appointment of the first-ever woman Minister of Education not only in Qatar but also in the entire region marked a milestone. Women now hold various influential positions, indicating a broader participation of women in public life. Much credit for this progress goes to the unwavering support of His Highness the Emir, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, for women's issues, and the leadership role played by Her Highness, Sheikha Mouza bint Nasser al-Misnad, the wife of the Emir, in many important institutions.

The third major development has been the emergence of the private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in social development, especially concerning women's advancement. For example, the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science, and Community Development, particularly through its Social Development Centre, has played a crucial role in offering programs tailored to women. Additionally, several private institutions focusing on women's issues, like the Qatari Institution for the Protection of Women and Children, have been established. Furthermore, women's significant involvement in volunteer work has been notable. This period has also seen increased participation from the private and mixed sectors in supporting organizations and projects addressing social development and issues relevant to women and families.