

**Sayed Nadeem Kazmi, Main Representative to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations on behalf of Al-Khoei Foundation<sup>1</sup>**

Al-Khoei Foundation, in its capacity as a leading Islamic institute, hereby declares its support towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals and emphasises the following:

That poverty is an affront to human dignity and it is a moral obligation on the part of those who believe in religion to actively combat it.

The eradication of poverty is not only a fundamental ethical and moral obligation of humanity, and in particular governments, but is a spiritual and religious duty.

That achieving universal primary education is an absolute imperative, particular in areas where access to education is difficult or non-existent for cultural or other reasons. Islam lays great emphasis on education as a right of all people of all ages.

That promoting and safeguarding women's rights, including the rights of the girl child, is an obligation on all Muslims.

That governments have a responsibility to proactively reduce child mortality, especially in the Least Developed Countries of the world.

The international community should support the efforts of LDCs in reducing child mortality through a proactive partnership between NGOs and governments, particularly educationalists and health care specialists. This includes the issue of improving maternal health.

Combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, which are particularly prevalent in certain poorer parts of the world, is a priority. We support greater education among certain communities, as well as greater investment in research and raising awareness.

Environmental protection is an absolute obligation. In Islam, the world is a gift to humankind held by human beings on trust. It must be cared for and protected through responsible ethical and moral legislative measures.

As a representative Muslim organization, we take this opportunity to call upon Muslims in particular to take action in support of the Millennium Development Goals. We reiterate our concerns regarding violations of women's human rights. Physical, verbal, sexual and psychological abuse is forbidden in Islam and Al-Khoei Foundation strongly condemns all forms of domestic violence and threats. In this context, we remain concerned at the prevalence of certain acts that are wrongly justified on spurious religious grounds.

Women and children remain particularly vulnerable as refugees and displaced persons, both in the context of conflict and migration (forced or otherwise). In refugee camps, the question of sanitation, the right to privacy and to dignity of the individual is paramount. We urge the relevant agencies and governments to prioritise their efforts in addressing these concerns.

We continue to emphasise the importance and relevance of interfaith and intrafaith dialogue in the context of the MDGs.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: *Justitia et Pax: Act Now for the Millennium Development Goals. Appeals from Religious Leaders and Scholars*, The Netherlands, 2005, [www.justitiaetpax.nl](http://www.justitiaetpax.nl); reproduced with permission.