

**REMARKS BY H.E MME BINETA DIOP**  
**SPECIAL ENVOY OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE AFRICAN UNION**  
**COMMISSION ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY**  
***CLOSSING CEREMONY OF THE ISLAMIC WORLD EDUCATIONAL,***  
***SCIENTIFIC, AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION'S YEAR OF WOMEN, 2021***  
**30 MARCH 2022**

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- **Dr Salim M. Almalik, Director General of the The Islamic World Educational, Scientific, And Cultural Organization**
- **Ms. Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, Former President of Malta**
- **Ms. Issatou Touray, vice president of the Republic of Gambia,**
- **Ms. Camelia Ntoutoume Leclerc, Minister of National Education in charge of Civic Education of the republic of Gabon**
- **Ms Awatef Hayar, Minister of Solidarity, Social Integration and Family in the Kingdom of Morocco**
- **Dr Hayat Katat, Minister of Cultural Affairs, Republic of Tunisia**
- **Dr Afnan Al Shuaiby, Executive Director of the Women's Development Organization**
- **Ms Moushira Khattab, President of the National Council for Human Rights**

**Ladies and Gentlemen!**

**Good evening!**

Let me start by thanking the The Islamic World Educational, Scientific, And Cultural Organization (ICESCO) for inviting me to celebrate with you the successful culmination of the 2021 year of women! I also want to congratulate ICESCO for dedicating the year 2021 to women. Indeed, this is a true demonstration by ICESCO that Islam values women and their contribution to the society. I commend you also for choosing the month of March, which is the international month of women to celebrate achievement made throughout the ICESCO'S 2021 year of women.

I also thank the Kingdom of Morocco, under the leadership of His Majesty King Mohammed VI for his commitment to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment. Through his leadership a number of reforms to enable women serve in decision making roles have been made. I take note of the launch of the first Morocco's National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security in March 2022 at the margins of the 66<sup>th</sup> session of the CSW in New York.

I also recognise and congratulate the Moroccan parliament for amending the law on public limited companies to provide for 30% women representation in boards by 2024, and 40% by 2027, making Morocco the first country in the Middle East and North Africa region to have such a law. And I commend you for demonstrating leadership for gender equality in the MENA region and to all Islamic States.

I am happy to note that, because of these reforms, the number of women in leadership roles in different sectors is growing, including in the cabinet where seven ( 7 ) women are ministers in a cabinet of twenty-four ( 24 ) which is 29% female representation, and in the foreign service where 21% of ambassadors, general consuls, secondary ambassadors, and chiefs of mission are females as of 2022, which is an impressive growth from 13.5% in 2017.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

Let me add my voice to that of my previous speakers to congratulate ICESCO for the different initiatives taken by ICESCO during the proclaimed year of women such as the launch of the Leadership Training in Peace and Security Program, and the Project for Countering the COVID-19 Pandemic through supporting Women and Youth Innovation and Entrepreneurship and for cascading these initiatives to the rural areas, which are core in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment. I pray that these initiatives will continue.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

As I conclude, I want to commend the women of Morocco for their resilient, hard work and determination which has made them firsts in the region. I want to particularly recognise their achievements including;

- The naming of two Moroccan women as top 50 scientists worldwide by the AD Scientific Index in 2021
- And the recognition of Moroccan women as the most powerful businesswomen in the MENA region by Forbes magazine 2021.

I commend these achievements and urge the women of Morocco and all Islamic states to press on and for the governments, academia and the civil society to continue supporting the women in all fields of peace, security and development.

**Thank you for your kind attention!**