



Islamic Relief  
Worldwide



THE  
LUTHERAN  
WORLD  
FEDERATION



World Council of Churches



## 29th Session of the UN Human Rights Council

16 June, 2015

### Joint Oral Statement: Item-3 SR on Violence Against Women

Thank you, Mr President. This statement is on behalf of Islamic Relief Worldwide, the Lutheran World Federation, the World Council of Churches, and the World Young Women Christian Association. Our organizations work with communities throughout the world. Therefore we are witnesses to the rampant incidences of serious physical, psychological, economic violence as well as violence committed in the name of religion. This violence causes untold hardship, undermines dignity and often leads to death of a large number of sufferers, particularly women.

Although we come from different religious traditions, we share a common vision to protect the rights of women and girls and end all forms of gender-based violence. We recognize that religious beliefs and practices can become obstacles, but also resources for addressing gender based violence. Some who abuse, justify or legitimize their behaviour by citing deliberate distortions of religious teachings, and women who have been victims/survivors or faced discrimination in some cases, have internalized a sense of guilt, self-blame or acceptance as a result of misinterpretation of religious texts and traditions.

Our organisations and many faith leaders and local faith communities are making public statements that denounce gender based violence and the use of religious teachings to justify it. Our initiatives and those of several communities of faith are providing education, refuge, psychosocial support and other means to empower women and girls experiencing violence. We commit to scaling up our efforts in these regards by building multi-sectorial partnerships, engaging faith leaders, strengthening our advocacy, developing codes of conduct and policies that empower women and work with men and boys, and challenging harmful and discriminatory interpretations and practices.

Mr. President and Distinguished delegates, we urge you:

- To consider faith communities as integral partners in the protection and promotion of the human rights of all people particularly in the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls.
- To encourage and create space for interfaith cooperation in the promotion of human rights.

Thank you Mr. President!