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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by Al-khoei Foundation, a non- governmental organization in general consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[2 February 2022]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only. The views expressed in the present document do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations or its officials.



Sustainable Development Goals Achieved By Al-Khoei Foundation Over The Last Year

Al-Khoei Foundation is an international charitable organisation that has been in General Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council since 1998. The Foundation strives to promote the values of equality, tolerance, respect and justice for all groups and minorities worldwide, and actively supports all initiatives that foster peaceful co-existence and friendship among different religious and non-religious groups. We work with local, national and international levels for the education and welfare of the Muslim community while focusing on promoting the empowerment of women, children and youth. The Foundation also works to improve and highlight issues that pose a severe threat to human rights with the help of our network of activists and community workers.

Our statement this year will focus on the sustainable development goals achieved by Al-Khoei Foundation over the last year.

REDUCING POVERTY

The Al-Kawthar Project for Widows and Orphans launched by the Al-Khoei Foundation in 2010. The project followed the Iraqi Aid Group that was established by the Foundation in 2003. Al-Kawthar is a humanitarian project providing aid, basic necessities, medical care, education, and micro-finance to widows and orphans in Iraq.

The Al-Kawthar Project has grown to sponsor over 700 orphans and provide occasional aid to a further 1000 orphans and 600 widows. The work of the project continuously evolves to adapt to the changing conditions on the ground in Iraq.

The project plays an effective role in fighting poverty and supporting the vulnerable orphans and widows. Due to limited resources, their work currently focuses on Iraq and some parts of East Africa.

ZERO HUNGER

Al-Khoei Foundation work through The Al-Kawthar Project for Widows and who offers sponsorship schemes that allow individuals to sponsor or co-sponsor orphans by committing to a fixed monthly donation. This donation will cover the cost of basic necessities of an orphan each month including food, clothing and education,

Al-Kawthar also offers different ways in which world hunger can be reduced including distribution of meat to feed orphans and needy children in a school in Arusha, the United Republic of Tanzania in East Africa.

Iraqi Muslims observe the holy month of Ramadan, a month in which Muslims fast from dawn to dusk. This month can be especially hard for those in poverty and living in hunger. Therefore, Al-Kawthar has launched an annual Ramadan Food Basket campaign where each donor contributes towards a food basket that contains Ramadan food essentials for the entire month.

GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Al-Kawthar Mental Wellness Programme was launched in 2021. This has been developed to sympathise with those in need and provide them with help and support through times of need. The aim is to educate and train their volunteers so that they can support the Widows and Orphans who may be going through mild or severe problems, to offer them a shoulder to lean on and provide support.

EDUCATION

Al-Khoei Foundation are passionate about education and empowering youth. They opened schools and supplementary schools for girls and boys in London, New York, Pakistan, Thailand and the Middle East 25 years ago. They have been teaching children lifelong skills and quality education.

Other than their work in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Al-Khoei foundation have also supported orphans who excel at school in Iraqi schools by giving them extra support.

GENDER EQUALITY

Al-Khoei foundation partnered up with an organisation called Urban Muslimz to present a six-week interactive leadership workshop. Participants were given the chance to co-chair events with successful Muslim women from weeks 2-6. The first week of the series was a confidence Building and Leadership Skills workshop to help boost the confidence of participants and give them a chance to practice co-chairing an event.

Al-Khoei highly encourages women to run their own businesses in order to be financially independent and economically sustainable. To do this, Al-Kawthar is promoting their Widows Empowerment and Capacity Building programme.

Preparation is underway for a sewing workshop which will begin very soon in the Al-Kawthar centre in Najaf to encourage and train women to prepare a variety of different clothing and to improve their sewing skills for more of a long-term benefit.

Al-Kawthar has also hosted a careers event online for young women aged 14-19. The event presented 10 successful women in different fields of work to explain how they got their jobs and what the benefits and negatives of their job are. The aim of this event was to give youth an insight into different fields of work and encourage them to achieve their goals.

CLIMATE ACTION

Every year millions of Shia Muslims travel to Iraq for the annual Arbaeen pilgrimage from the city of Najaf to the city of Karbala.

The walk from Najaf to Karbala is approximately 99 kilometres. Along the roads to Karbala, there are many tents and stalls that provide accommodation, food, medical services and practically anything the pilgrims need for free.

Al-Khoei participated in serving the pilgrims. They encouraged the citizens to be environmentally cautious by providing recycling facilities and refillable water station and gave out food in recyclable food bags.

PEACE, JUSTICE, AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

The Shia Hazara community in Afghanistan have been violently targeted and brutally marginalised for many years. Since the elimination of international forces and security from Afghanistan, violence and killings against the Hazara community has intensified.

Since the fall of the Taliban in 2001, the Hazara Community in Afghanistan have tried to rebuild their lives and gain confidence in their safety. The recent seize of the Taliban on 15 August 2021 has meant that all their efforts to rebuild and re-establish their lives have disappeared. One refugee stated “I had spent 25 years ... mak[ing] a life for myself and my kids, but everything is gone now. Home, education, work; everything is gone.... Finally, we decided to leave for Pakistan.” (IDS, 2021).

Individuals who succeeded in entering Pakistan hoped they it would be the end of their worries however it seems Hazara have no place to go. On 15th September, the Baluchistan authorities decided on prohibiting anyone from offering refuge to Afghan refugees and

warned of strict consequences. Baluchistan also deported more than 500 refugees back to Afghanistan.

International governments must make sure that the Taliban pledge to protect the rights of the Hazara community

CHILD SAFETY

Al-Khoei Foundation is passionate about the safety of children, which is why they organised a conference against child sex abuse. The aim of this event was to educate Muslims on ways of combatting child sexual abuse.

It is vital we raise awareness about protecting vulnerable children and those at risk of child sexual abuse.

Al-Khoei Foundation as a Muslim community condemn in the strongest terms such abuse. We are strongly committed to making a reality of our values - to strengthening our protection for the vulnerable and potentially vulnerable; to supporting and assisting those who have come forward because of what they have experienced or on behalf of others; and also to appropriate care for handling of allegations.

We worked with other Faith Communities to discuss on a number of occasions in recent years the question of how faith communities can improve their safeguarding measures and ensure a safe and secure environment for their members and others. We have shared our knowledge and received helpful advice from bodies.
