



16 August 2010

Dear Dr. Stuckelberger,

The Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues (OSAGI) and the Doha International Institute for Family Studies and Development (DIIFSD) are organizing a two-day colloquium on promoting the empowerment of women in Arab countries, to be convened in Tunis on 5-6 October 2010.

The meeting will build on the knowledge that gender inequality remains one of the most important challenges to human development and sustainable peace. Although their numbers and influence are increasing, many women around the world continue to be marginalized from the economy, society, politics and decision-making.

The purpose of the colloquium will be to explore and highlight how and why gender empowerment is crucial for sound socio-economic development of society. The meeting will explore the main impediments in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment in the region, and recommend what can be done to adopt appropriate and forward-looking policy responses. Experts dealing with various aspects of social development are being invited from a broad range of countries to participate in the colloquium. It is anticipated that there would be approximately twenty-five participants, including twenty experts participating in their personal capacity. These experts have been identified and are being invited jointly by the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues (OSAGI) and the Doha International Institute for Family Studies and Development (DIIFSD). Representatives from Qatari institutions, international organizations, United Nations offices and agencies will also be invited. An aide-memoire providing further details regarding the colloquium is enclosed.

Dr. Astrid Stuckelberger
University of Geneva

Given the importance of this colloquium in the region, and your extensive knowledge and experience of the issues involved, we would like to extend an invitation to you to participate. Discussion and brainstorming will be the preferred method of work and no formal conference style presentations are envisioned. Therefore, the advance preparation of written inputs by the experts will be of great importance. The enclosed aide-memoire explains that the conference will be divided into five sessions. We would ask participants to submit a fifteen-page paper relating to one or two of these sessions by 15 September 2010, as well as recommendations. Papers should be submitted in either English or Arabic and will be published following the colloquium.

We would be most grateful if you could indicate your acceptance by email to Ms. Christine Harrop (OSAGI), harrop@un.org, and Mrs. Amina Mesdoua (DIIFSD), amesdoua@qf.org.qa. The Doha International Institute for Family Studies and Development will provide airline tickets, hotel accommodation and meals for three nights. Participants will be required to bear any other costs relating to their participation and will be responsible for securing the necessary visas.

We thank you in advance, and look forward to our collaboration to address this important development issue.

Yours sincerely,



Rachel Mayanja
Assistant Secretary-General
Special Adviser to the Secretary-General
on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women



Richard G. Wilkins
Managing Director
DIIFSD