



musawah

For Equality in the Family

Quotes from Musawah participants

Dr Margot Badran

Senior Fellow at the Prince Alwaleed bin Talal Center for Muslim Christian Understanding

Georgetown University in Washington D.C.

“Here we are in the early 21st Century, tackling the last major issue: equality in the family. I do believe that equality and justice for women in Muslim communities is the final frontier in the territory of unresolved issues. Integral to achieving equality in the Muslim family is also legal equality. The power and energy of global collective action – such as what we have seen here at Musawah – will help achieve this. In terms of global organising, of bringing together academics and activists, Musawah has been a landmark event.”

Nassirou Zahara Aboubacar

Association of Muslim Youth and member of the Niger Islamic Council

“What’s next? For me in Niger, it will be to bring everyone together, to work and apply what we have learned here. I do many talk shows on television and radio and I will use these opportunities to spread the message of equality and justice. Musawah also gave African participants a chance to get together. We have formed a small committee and the coordinators will work towards bringing change in Muslim family laws in the continent. In Niger, right now, we do not even have the chance to talk about equality. What can be discussed is equity, not equality. I am one of two women who sit on the 22-member Islamic Council and this is huge progress in my country.”

Sawsan Abedul Hamid Ruslan

Women Initiative Committee, Syria

“Musawah made me realise that Islam is more than just about Arabs. This experience has broadened my perspectives , and it will also broaden my future actions. We live under the same references, and we must remember that in any reinterpretation of Islam, more than just Arabs are affected.

Hikmat Halasseh

Jordanian Women’s Union

“Musawah has brought the knowledge that in any intervention for equality and justice, the reference will be the Qur’an. But I would rather that we had talked not only about the Muslim family, but about families in general. I felt that this should not have been a discussion that had been restricted to Muslims only.”

Maha Zeinelabdin

Regional coordinator of Peace Women Across the Globe, Sudan

“Musawah has allowed us to compare our different realities and to celebrate our diversity. What we have done here is to stress our commonalities. In doing that, we have come up with a framework that will guide women’s organisations in different countries in addressing family law reforms.”

Ghada Shawgi

Advisory Committee member for the Khartoum Human Rights Centre, Sudan

“This meeting has added value to the women’s movement with its approach of bringing *fiqh* and universal human rights together. It was good that we were able to come together to deliberate on strategies we can adopt next in pursuing Muslim family law reforms.”

Djingarey Maiga

Femmes et Droits Humains, Mali

“This was an opportunity to exchange views and realities in women’s everyday lives, and to learn from those who have succeeded in pushing for reforms in their own countries. I hope to use the knowledge and strategies we have shared, especially while working with a movement which is currently working on family law reforms. We have many women leaders but the problem is that their interpretation of the Qur’an is what the religious men tell them. This has got to change first.”

Raissa H. Jajurie

Alternative Legal Assistance Centre, Philippines

“We are a minority group in Mindanao. I am not sure how we can get into a position of equality, but Musawah has inspired us to look at the various possibilities and given us all the tools to work with. I have been involved in development work and setting up a programme for the Moro (indigenous Muslims from Mindanao), focusing on women issues. I hope to gather and work with women’s groups and leaders of NGOs towards creating greater awareness, particularly on gender relations in the context of culture and Muslim laws. With the armed struggle going on, it is difficult working with our brothers and trying to look into gender issues among the Muslims, but we are nevertheless taking baby steps.”

For more information, see the Musawah website: <http://www.musawah.org>.