



For immediate release
MEDIA ADVISORY

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“Our common prosperity will be advanced by allowing all humanity, men and women, to reach their full potential... I am convinced that our daughters can contribute just as much to society as our sons.”

President Barak Obama

Over 200 Muslim Women Worldwide to Release “Jihad Against Violence,” Launch Muslim Women’s Online Portal, and Inaugurate Muslim Women’s Fund

New York City, NY--July 13, 2009—Over 200 Muslim women activists, academics, religious scholars, lawyers and community leaders will meet to launch the first Global Women’s Shura Council, Muslim Women’s Fund and Muslim Women’s Online Portal this summer. They will come from over 40 countries to meet in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia July 16-19, 2009 at a conference entitled **Muslim Women: Building Institutions, Creating Change**. As part of the larger Women’s Islamic Initiative in Spirituality and Equality (WISE) program, the event aims to build a network of Muslim women to challenge distorted interpretations of Islam, increase the socio-economic self-determination of Muslim women worldwide, and create positive social change.

“The **Muslim Women: Building Institutions, Creating Change** conference is a historic moment for Muslim women’s activism and an opportunity to build on the change President Obama highlighted in his speech in Cairo,” said Daisy Khan, WISE founder. “We’re thrilled to build upon the collective experiences of Muslim women from around the world and establish a true global support network of Muslim women working for social change at the dawning of this new political era.”

The event will launch three initiatives aimed at empowering Muslim women and increasing their connectivity and socio-economic capacity. They include the following:

- ***Global Muslim Women’s Shura Council***, an all-women’s advisory council that will promote women’s rights within an Islamic framework. At the conference, the Shura Council will **issue its first statement, *Jihad against Violence***.
- ***Muslim Women’s Fund*** will fund strategic and innovative grassroots initiatives supporting Muslim women around the world.
- ***Muslim Women’s Online Portal*** will connect Muslim women globally and serve as an authoritative source for a diverse range of issues relating to Muslim women.

Among the attendees are a number of prominent Muslim women leaders, including:

- **Aisha Rafea**, Egyptian spiritual leader
- **Amina Wadud**, first woman to lead a mixed congregation prayer in the U.S.
- **Dawood Sharifa Khanam**, activist who plans to build the first all-women's mosque in India
- **Samar Fatany**, Saudi radio host
- **Suraya Pakzad**, recently named by TIME Magazine as one of the World's 100 Most Influential People
- **Masouda Jalal**, past presidential candidate in Afghanistan
- **Laila Al Zwaini**, Dutch lawyer specializing in Yemeni and Afghani tribal law
- **Seyran Ates**, activist of Turkish descent fighting honor killings in Germany

*The 2009 WISE Kuala Lumpur Conference is organized by the American Society for Muslim Advancement (ASMA) in collaboration with the Cordoba Initiative (CI). It is supported by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Dutch Foreign Ministry's MDG3 Fund. Additional supporters include the Sister Fund and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund. For more information on the conference, to set up interviews with participants or media accreditation, please contact **Mahdis Keshavarz** at **+1.425.591.8781 (U.S.); +6.012.641.2030 (Malaysia);** [**mahdis@thefakeagency.com**](mailto:mahdis@thefakeagency.com)*

The Women's Islamic Initiative in Spirituality and Equality (WISE):

Empowering Muslim Women Around the Globe

The WISE program aims to empower Muslim women to fully participate in their communities and nations as well as to amplify their voices at all levels of political, economic, religious and social discourse. By creating the infrastructure and processes for Muslim women to join together and challenge the distorted interpretations of Islam and increasing their social and economic self-determination, WISE aims to change the status of Muslim women around the globe. This global network of individuals, groups, organizations, institutions and communities uses the teachings of Islam – both as inspiration and justification – for Muslim women's empowerment.

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