



**The Sub-Regional Forum  
on  
Women's Participation  
in Post-Revolution Parliamentary Elections**



**Comparative Experiences  
Egypt - Libya - Tunisia**

**Cairo, 9-10 December 2012**



**Report**  
**on**  
**The Sub-Regional Forum**  
**on**  
**Women's Participation**  
**in Post-Revolution Parliamentary Elections**



**Comparative Experiences**  
**from Egypt, Libya and Tunisia**

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## Introduction

This report aims at documenting the proceedings of the Sub-Regional Forum on Women's Participation in Parliamentary Elections in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya; the three Arab countries which are going through a transition period to build democracy, since 2011, following the Arab Spring revolutions. It presents comparative experiences, regional and international perspectives, as well as the discussions and debates that revolved around them. The Forum, organized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), brought together more than 120 participants from among policy and decision makers, legislators and national opinion leaders from Egypt, Libya and Tunisia. It also included members of the committees for drafting of legislations (constitution or electoral laws); government representatives; elected and non-elected candidates (men and women); members from the main political parties; academia and the media; civil society organizations; women election observers; as well as representatives of international organizations. This varied group was selected to ensure the engagement of both men and women to support efforts and partnerships conducive to the achievement of gender equality, social justice and equal participation in the current democratic transition. It is hoped that this report will serve as a reference document for the three countries and for other countries in similar stages of democratic transitions.

## Methodology

The report begins by presenting a brief background on the situation in each of Egypt, Libya and Tunisia after the Arab Spring revolutions. It starts with an abstract of the statements given by the officials and experts participating in the Forum to shed light on key issues in the three countries, whether by presentations or case studies or through the discussions. The full text of the statements in the original language, or translated, are annexed to the report.

The Forum consisted of 5 plenary sessions which provided the opportunity for floor discussions and interaction among participants, following both the presentations and the case studies. Round tables were organized during which each group of participants discussed the situation in their respective countries, deliberated separately on their specific experience and challenges, reflected on the lessons learned and the way forward, and reported to the plenary session the lessons learned, together with their proposed recommendations.

The debates were facilitated by highly experienced moderators who summarized the main observations, conclusions and recommendations of the participants at the end of each session. The debates were mostly conducted in Arabic with simultaneous translation in English and Arabic provided.

Successful regional and international experiences from other countries transitioning to democracy were shared with the audience.

It is worth noting that, in preparation for the Forum, and particularly for the way forward, the UN provided the participants with useful UN documents, such as relevant General Assembly resolutions, as well as samples of gender responsive constitutions/women charters and other documents for reference and guidance. <http://www.unwomen.org/>

A team from UNDP Egypt, UN Women and volunteers, with guidance from senior consultants, recorded the sessions' proceedings over the two days of the Forum (9 -10 December 2012).

## **Executive Summary**

The Sub-Regional Forum on Women's Participation in Post-Revolution Parliamentary Elections - Comparative Experiences from Egypt, Libya and Tunisia - was held in Cairo, Egypt, from 9-10 December 2012.

The purpose of the Forum was to bring together decision-makers, parliamentarians, politicians, experts and scholars from the three Arab Spring countries and other countries to share experiences and discuss challenges in order to help each country draw a road map for the way forward and to determine ways and means through which they can network and collaborate to mutually support the enhancement of women's participation.

The introductory session started by welcoming the participants and explaining the Forum's main objectives and proceedings, stressing the importance given by the UN to women's empowerment and effective political participation. This was followed by country presentations from senior officials responsible for the empowerment of women in each of the three countries on the current status of women's political participation and the importance of this Forum to help each of the three countries achieve their aspirations for a better future for their citizens.

The first session aimed at expounding how special measures within the electoral system can enhance women's representation, followed by a comparative analysis as to whether or not these measures were used in the three countries, and their results. A floor discussion provided an opportunity to share first hand observation by participants from the three countries. A case study on the experience of the 2008 elections in Nepal was shared as a best practice in enhancing the participation of women and minorities in parliamentary elections.

The second session dealt with the challenges that women candidates in the region face, the role of political parties in the candidate selection and the internal voting mechanisms in political parties. The presentation and the floor discussions described and helped identify the factors that can enable women's participation in elections, such as the support of parties, civil society, particularly women NGOs, international organizations, how the media can and should play a supportive role, and on the other hand, how the lack of funding can be a disabling factor. The challenges that politicians, particularly women, face were described by an eminent politician through her experience as a parliamentarian in the British Parliament and in the Parliaments of the European Union and the European Council, who also gave advice on how women candidates could hone their political experience.

Session three focused on a comparative analysis of the challenges encountered, the opportunities provided by the Revolutions and the transition to democracy in the three countries: where and why did it contribute to an enhanced participation of women voters? It also discussed the impact of voter education, the role of the electoral administration and other forms of support; and described how to reach out to women voters. The experience of Yemen in the post revolution elections on the modalities of reaching out to women voters and activating their engagement was shared with the Forum's participants.

The Fourth Session on the Second Day focused on gender sensitivities in electoral management and how legal provisions do not provide sufficient support for women. The importance of gender in democratic governance, including electoral management was stressed. The case study of the South African experience and the discussions emphasized the importance of disaggregated qualitative and quantitative statistics and research, shedding light on the obstacles

that have to be overcome to ensure women's equal participation as voters and candidates. The fifth session highlighted the importance of the role of women's organizations in supporting the participation of women whether through civic education and awareness, electoral observation, voting or running for elections. The experience of the 50/50 Group from Sierra Leone was enthusiastically shared with the audience, which described how tailor-made tools can mobilize the participation of men and women in civic life.

Sessions were followed by round table discussions, facilitated by a moderator. Participants were divided into three groups to reflect on the major challenges in their respective countries that prevent women's participation in political life and to recommend measures that could enhance their role in building their societies. In a plenary session, each group presented its findings which revealed that while the three countries faced similar challenges, mainly constitutional, legal, procedural, social and cultural, yet each country had its own specific challenges. The recommendations of the three countries reflected the need for regional and international networking, for learning from the different experiences and for sharing best practices.

The closing session recognized the common needs of the three countries. As participants confirmed their readiness to pursue their efforts towards the political empowerment of women and highlighted the usefulness of exposure to other experiences, the UN representatives also expressed their satisfaction with the findings of the Forum and declared their readiness to support any country-owned and country-led initiative to increase and enhance women's political participation.

## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	i
Methodology .....	ii
Executive Summary .....	iii
1. Background .....	11
2. Objectives .....	12
3. Forum Proceedings: .....	15
3.1 Opening Session .....	15
Ambassador Omar Abou Eish .....	15
Mr. Geoffrey Prewitt .....	16
Dr. Sammira Al Tuwaijri (Delivered by Dr. M. Morsy) .....	16
Dr. Carlos Valenzuela .....	17
3.2 Introductory Country Presentations .....	18
Egypt: Presentation by Ambassador Mervat Tallawy .....	18
Libya: Presentation by Ms. Wafaa Bugaighis .....	19
Tunisia: Presentation by Ms. Kalthoum Badreddine .....	20
3.3 Forum Sessions .....	21
Session I: <i>Electoral Arrangements to Enhance Women's Representation</i> .....	21
Presentation on "Special Measures to Enhance Women's Substantive Representation" by Dr. Ali Abdul Jabar .....	21
Case study on "Special Measures in Nepal" by Mr. Neel Uprety .....	22
Discussions Moderated by Dr. Fatima Al Abbasi .....	22
Session II: <i>Women's Participation as Candidates - Regional and International Perspectives</i> .....	24
Presentation on "Experience of Women Candidates in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia" by Ms. Soulef Guessoum, .....	24
Case Study on "Women Candidates" by Baroness Emma Nicholson of Winterbourne .....	25
Discussions moderated by Dr. Ali Abdul Jabar .....	26
Session III: <i>Women's Participation as Voters: Challenges and Opportunities</i> .....	27
Presentation on "Enhanced Participation of Women as Voters in the three Parliamentary Elections: Elements for a Comparative Analysis" by Ms. Shahrazad Maghrabi .....	27
Case study "Showcase of Specific Programs" by Ms. Ilham Abdul Wahab .....	27
Discussions moderated by Dr. Hoda Badran, .....	28



<b>Session IV: <i>Gender Sensitivity in Electoral Administration</i></b> .....	<b>29</b>
<b>Presentation</b> on “Gender Sensitivity in Electoral Administration: Egypt, Libya and Tunisia (2011/2012)” by Omar Boubakri .....	<b>29</b>
<b>Case study</b> on “South Africa” by Ms. Thoko Mpumlwana .....	<b>30</b>
<b>Discussions</b> moderated by Judge Hesham Mokhtar .....	<b>30</b>
 <b>Session V: <i>The Role of CSOs and International Organizations in Supporting Women’s Participation</i></b> .....	<b>32</b>
<b>Presentation</b> on “Women’s Organization Engagement in Support of the Electoral Process in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia” by Dr. Maya Morsy .....	<b>32</b>
<b>Case Study</b> on “Sierra Leone” by Dr. Nemata Majeks-Walker .....	<b>32</b>
<b>Discussions</b> moderated by Dr. Inas Abouyoussef .....	<b>33</b>
 <b>Roundtable Discussions:</b>	
<b>Presentations of Lessons-Learned and Way Forward by Country:</b> .....	<b>34</b>
<b>EGYPT</b> - facilitated by Dr. Ali El Sawi .....	<b>34</b>
<b>LIBYA</b> - facilitated by Dr. Rida Al Tuluby .....	<b>36</b>
<b>TUNISIA</b> - facilitation by Mr. Said Khezami presented by Ms. Imen Houimel .....	<b>37</b>
 UN Electoral Assistance Division Intervention: Mr. Mansour Sadeghi .....	<b>38</b>
Closing Session: Mr. Carlos Valenzuela .....	<b>39</b>
 <b>4. Forum Outputs</b> .....	<b>40</b>
<b>4.1 Lessons Learned</b> .....	<b>40</b>
<b>4.2 Recommendations</b> .....	<b>41</b>
<b>4.3 Conclusion:</b> .....	<b>42</b>
 Pictorial Documentation .....	<b>43</b>
 Annexes .....	<b>51</b>
<b>Annex 1 : Forum Agenda</b> .....	<b>53</b>
<b>Annex 2 :</b> .....	<b>63</b>
• Introductory Speeches	
• Country Presentations	
• Closing Statements	
<b>Annex 3 : Concept Note &amp;Background Papers on Key issues</b> .....	<b>97</b>
<b>Annex 4 : Case Studies</b> .....	<b>133</b>
<b>Annex 5 : Documents</b> .....	<b>163</b>
• UN Documents	
• Other documents	
 About the Speakers .....	<b>189</b>
List of Invitees .....	<b>201</b>



## 1. Background

1.1 The recent events which Egypt, Libya and Tunisia have witnessed since 2011, during what came to be known as “the Arab Spring” brought about new political and cultural changes common to the three countries, as a result of people’s publicly demanding a change that would lead to freedom, social justice and dignity. After momentous, massive and continuous demonstrations, the three countries succeeded in changing the ruling regimes, and are now going through a transition phase, all following the same major steps towards building their democracy and are in somewhat similar stages of progress towards that goal. Early parliamentary elections were held; presumably to pave the way for drafting new constitutions; debates on electoral systems, electoral institutions and practices of elections were and are still ongoing. Despite similarities, Egypt, Libya and Tunisia, differ in the way they are experiencing the political transition and the electoral process. Tunisia conducted its elections for the National Constituent Assembly in October 2011, which is currently in session. Egypt had parliamentary elections from November 2011 to February 2012 and presidential elections in May-June 2012, and is currently engaged in the constitutional drafting, to be followed by a referendum in December 2012<sup>1</sup> and new parliamentary elections. Libya successfully held its National Congress elections in July 2012 and will soon engage in constitutional drafting that will also be followed by a referendum.

1.2 The context of women’s participation in the recent parliamentary elections in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia. In the demonstrations that led to the revolutions in all three countries and in all the elections and subsequent constitutional reviews, women were active and engaged participants and forces of change. Egypt, Libya and Tunisia witnessed very strong and active participation of women as voters, particularly in comparison with previous processes under the former regimes. For example, 45% of registered voters in the first national elections in Libya, in over 40 years, were women. In terms of parliamentary elections, the results differed. In Egypt, the representation of women in the upper and lower chambers of the post revolution Parliament was 2%, whereas under the former regime, it stood at 12.7% (IPU 12/ 2010). In Tunisia, one of the more advanced countries in the region in terms of women’s representation, women won 29 % of the parliamentary seats, i.e. 63 seats - in an update, this number has increased to 65 seats making it a 29.95% win. In Libya, special measures ensured that there were women candidates on the Proportional Representation (PR) list, yet the overall women’s representation in the new National Congress is only 16% (or 33 seats, of which 32 were won via the PR lists and only one woman candidate won in the remaining 120 majoritarian constituency seats).

### 1.3 Women in the Transition to Democracy.

Women’s political influence is not only reliant upon a critical mass of women being represented in decision-making processes and positions, but also on their capacities, their power relationships and their ability to influence policy debates. Again, in the post revolution stage, women’s expectations have not yet been met. In Tunisia, none of the key government positions are held by women; in Egypt, the promised appointment of a woman Vice President did not materialize and, out of 35 ministerial positions, only two are women. It would seem that women who put their lives on the line demanding the change of the regimes, freedom and justice for all, are once more in danger of being excluded from newly-formed decision making bodies, although they constitute about half of the population.

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1. The referendum which was held on 15 and 22 December 2012 confirmed the draft constitution.

## 2. Objectives:

### 2.1 General Objectives

In addition to its normative obligations on gender equality and women's empowerment, the UN is committed to the promotion of women's participation in political processes including supporting representation in decision-making bodies. The United Nations Working Group on Discrimination Against Women in Law and in Practice stressed that political transitions "offer unprecedented opportunities for progress on women's human rights, despite there being a risk of regression and new forms of discrimination." The UN Secretary-General clearly indicated that one of the main priorities for his second term includes support for the political transition in the Arab countries and more specifically emphasized efforts necessary to promote women's political participation and representation.

### 2.2 Specific Objectives

To this end, and to better understand the factors influencing women's effective and meaningful political participation in parliamentary elections and its gains, UNDP<sup>2</sup> and UN Women<sup>3</sup> organized a joint Forum in Cairo, Egypt, from 9 – 10 December 2012 at the Fairmont Hotel in Heliopolis, with regional and international participation. The Forum aimed to stress the importance of sharing experiences and benefiting from networking with other regional and international electoral commissions which can be of benefit in future elections in the three countries and the region. Similarities, differences, efforts and experiences shared during the Forum can serve to enhance awareness, review lessons learned and provide an opportunity for electoral administration officials to network with other election administrators, academics, civil society organizations representatives and experts working in the field of elections.

2.3. Through sharing experiences, knowledge and information, the Forum aimed to:

- Identify and assess the efficiency of the concrete electoral measures applied by each to guarantee a substantial representation of women in the new post-revolution parliaments in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia;
- Present and assess other measures designed in the region and throughout the world in order to improve women's representation in parliament;
- Identify specific factors that have led to the strong participation of women in the elections in all three countries, for the purpose of sustaining this level of participation in future elections;
- Identify how electoral authorities incorporated a gender perspective in their work, (including electoral preparation and voter outreach) and assess the participation of women as members of the respective electoral administrations;

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2 UNDP partners with people at all levels of society to help build nations that can withstand crises, and drive and sustain the kind of growth that improves the quality of life for everyone. On the ground in 177 countries and territories, we offer global perspective and local insight to help empower lives and build resilient nations.

3 UN Women (UNW), grounded in the vision of equality enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, works for the elimination of discrimination against women and girls, the empowerment of women, and the achievement of equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development, human rights, humanitarian action and peace and security. Placing women's rights at the centre of all its efforts, the UN Women will lead and coordinate United Nations system efforts to ensure that commitments on gender equality and gender main streaming translate into action throughout the world. It will provide strong and coherent leadership in support of countries' programmes, priorities and efforts, building effective partnerships with civil society and other relevant actors.

- Analyze the impact of the good practice of support provided by women groups and their participation in the preparation for the elections (civic education, electoral observation);
- Review the role and support of international organizations, key activities and programs and draw lessons learned.
- Assess the role of political parties as key stakeholders in ensuring a stronger women's representation.
- Propose ways and measures to ensure higher women's participation and representation in future parliamentary elections in the three countries.



### 3. Forum Proceedings:

#### First Day: 9 December 2012



#### 3.1 Opening Session

*Ambassador Omar Abou Eish*, Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for International Cooperation - Egypt, welcomed the initiative of organizing this UN Forum at this critical moment in the history of the three Arab Spring countries. He confirmed that Egypt has signed and ratified most of the international treaties and conventions that protect and guarantee the rights of women and the fundamental value of gender equality and equal opportunities, adding that promoting women's rights and women's political empowerment are pivotal to the achievement of gender equality. However, gender equality is an area in which all countries of the region face similar challenges, despite the transformation towards the achievement of democracy observed during the past two years in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia.

Women's participation in the transitional period in Egypt was meaningful, as reflected in the impressive turnout of women as voters in the recent elections and as demonstrated by their eagerness to engage proactively in the democratic process; yet their representation in the parliament and in the Constituent Assembly was minimal during all the stages of the transition. Their representation in parliament did not exceed 2% and their presence in the country's decision-making bodies was poor. After the fall of the regime in 2011, the quota system was abolished and the majority of women candidates in the recent elections were placed at the bottom of the party lists. However, Egyptian women are striving to maintain their rights. It is hoped that the electoral law that stipulates the presence of at least one woman on each party list, the efforts exerted by the restructured National Council for Women demanding proportional number of seats for women and the efforts of the civil society will achieve a fairer representation and participation of women.

The UN commendable efforts in providing platforms for exchanging views on gender equality in the post-revolution parliamentary elections, and for learning from different experiences can provide the electoral administration officials the opportunity to network with election administrators, academics, civil society organization representatives and experts working in the field of elections elsewhere.

*Mr. Geoffrey Prewitt*, Deputy Head, UNDP Regional Center, Cairo, Regional Bureau for the Arab States, expressed his pleasure in participating in this Forum, thanking the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for hosting this event, and UN partners, UN Women and the entire Electoral Assistance Initiative team for their cooperation. He noted with pleasure the diverse delegations from Egypt, Libya and Tunisia. He stated that the events of early 2011 in the three countries represented a break with the past offering a promise of renewed societies built on justice and freedom, as well as an opportunity for citizens from across the region to bring fundamental changes to their role in public life.

He acknowledged the part played by women as agents of change through their active participation, as thousands of women took to the streets demanding a better future for their children and countries and insisting that their voices were equally important in constructing a truly free Egypt, Libya and Tunisia. The participation of women was truly the backbone of much of the transition.

Mr. Prewitt emphasized that challenges still remain, noting that the Forum was about continuing the struggle and seeking new opportunities, and that UNDP's Regional Office is offering its support, such as providing platforms for exchange of experience, knowledge and lessons learned to help the three countries to advocate for their development priorities, as the three countries have recently concluded their first parliamentary elections since the fall of the previous regimes and were currently undertaking new constitutional drafting processes and debates on the electoral systems and their respective institutions.

In conclusion, he stated that though the discussions scheduled over the two days are about laws, rules, procedures, systems and capacity in management, fundamentally they are about what kind of society we want to build and what kind of future we want and how can we work together to get there.



*Dr. Sameera Al-Tuwaijri*, Regional Director, Arab States Regional Office, UN Women, in her speech delivered on her behalf by *Dr. Maya Morsy*, UN Women Country Coordinator, stated that despite the ongoing discourse on participation and representation of women in the transition to democracy, women of the Arab world continue to demand their unfulfilled rights.



This Forum will therefore focus on the enabling factors and on identifying challenges that prevent women from exercising their full rights as citizens; whether these factors are in the design of the electoral systems, its institutions, or in the system at large.

UN Women has developed Standard Operating Principles for Women's Participation in Democratic Transitions to ensure free and fair elections for women, encourage political parties to address gender equality, support women's civil society organizations to advance women's interests, build accountability for women's rights in public institutions, enhance the capacity of women in policy-making and oversight in public office and promote gender justice.

UN Women's *raison d'être* is to deliver results that advance gender equality and improve women's lives by supporting countries to enhance legal frameworks and national capacities to build strong institutional accountability for gender equality, through solid partnerships, coordination, sharing of information, knowledge, best practices and lessons learned.

To put the efforts towards the achievements of these goals into a framework, the General Assembly in March 2012, adopted the UN General Assembly Resolution 66/130<sup>4</sup> which calls for eliminating discriminatory laws, systems and practices that prevent or restrict women's participation in the political process.

In conclusion, the participants were urged to put together their cumulative experience and seize this unique opportunity to benefit from the vast expertise of the guest speakers and experts who are sharing their invaluable experience on the issues at hand.

*Dr. Carlos Valenzuela*, Chief Electoral Adviser, UNDP Electoral Support in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia, in his introductory presentation on the "Pertinence and Objectives of the Forum at this Particular Point in Time" greeted the participants and the panel and thanked the teams of the Electoral Support project in the three countries.



He reiterated the fact that the participation of women in the political transitions experienced in the three countries was very important, and that though elections do not constitute the whole political transition, yet women's participation in the elections was absolutely essential to ensure the required credibility.

This Forum was not intended to be an academic event, but rather a lessons-learned exercise to study the first parliamentary elections after the Revolutions in the three countries, assess the gains and the obstacles to be able to look forward, as new elections are coming, constitutions to be written, and laws to be made.

He wished the participants productive sessions.

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<sup>4</sup> This Resolution calls upon all States to eliminate discriminatory laws, regulations and practices that prevent or restrict women's participation in the political process, as well as to enhance the political participation of women, and accelerate the achievement of equality between men and women in all situations, including situations of political transition. Furthermore, the Resolution provides, *inter alia*, mechanisms to encourage women in the electoral process, to develop and/or promote appropriate temporary measures to ensure women's representation in parliament.

### 3.2 Introductory Country Presentations



**Egypt:** Presentation by *Ambassador Mervat Tallawy*, President, National Council for Women

The 25th of January Revolution represents a critical turning point in the lives of all Egyptian men and women, which enabled them to proclaim their rights and aspirations. Yet despite their effective participation, women's presence in the transitional government is minimal, with only two women ministers, eleven in Parliament and seven in the Constituent Assembly, despite the mil-

lions of women who went to the polls and regardless of the 30 names of constitutional experts proposed by the National Council for Women (NCW) to participate in the drafting of Egypt's post revolution Constitution.

The restructuring of NCW in February 2012, gave new dynamism to the national machinery charged with the advancement of women who face challenges on several fronts, mostly evident in the call by extremist trends in parliament to repeal some of the existing laws related to women's and children's rights such as the personal status and family laws, age of marriage, etc., claiming their incompatibility with the Islamic Sharia.

NCW, by virtue of its new mandate, urged the government and the civil society to unite and collaborate to entrench citizenship rights, the rule of law, equality in rights, freedoms, and public duties, equal opportunities for all citizens and to provide a fair opportunity for women's appointment to all levels of decision-making.

NCW has reactivated its 27 local branches in the governorates and worked towards reinstating the Equal Opportunity Units (EOUs) in the ministries. It continues, with its partners, to engender the national socio-economic development plan through gender budgeting, monitoring and evaluation, expanding the outreach of its capacity-building program and its Ombudsman Office to support women nationwide.

With regard to promoting women's political participation, several dimensions (constitutional, legislative, societal, educational and cultural) have to be taken into account.

The current constitution poses a serious concern as it does not explicitly stipulate the rights of women as equal to men, but limits their rights to their roles within the family. The conservative trend challenges/compromises the rights of women to participate in public and political life. To address this, NCW sought and obtained the support of the Grand Imam of Al Azhar by issuing a document defining the position and rights of women in the Sharia (Islamic principles and laws).

The electoral laws and systems must call for and urge political parties to allocate a special quota for women and a top position on their election lists. Such measures have worked well in several countries. Laws should also take into consideration all procedures and legislations related to elections, including the system for dividing electoral constituencies, the important

role of the civil society in support of women is political participation, which should be embodied in a legal framework. This will enable CSOs to better carry out their role in this regard.

This event is probably the first of its kind after the Revolutions, as it provides important documentation and experiences on the various aspects and elements of women's political participation in the current transitional period. It is crucial to study the technical details of the political processes and why women are not a priority. Experiences have to be analysed to find out how societies' views on women in politics can be changed. Women's rights are not a gift, rather a necessity and a social issue that concerns the entire society.



**Libya:** Presentation by *Ms. Wafaa Bugaighis*, Chair of the Committee to Support Women's Participation in Decision-making

Empowering men and women to ensure their full participation in the transition to democracy is of paramount importance. In Libya, as in the two other countries of the Arab Spring, women still face problems because of the prevailing conservative political, societal and cultural environment. Women's participation in the post-revolution elections in Libya was their first experience in actively engaging in politics. Libyan women did not start practising their citizenship rights until 7 July 2012, with the first free elections, which was a historic moment for Libya. Of the 80% registered voters, women represented 45%. More than 600 women competed for the elections, despite several challenges impeding their participation.

Within the context of the first draft of the Electoral Law, a 10% quota was allocated for women. However, both the law and the quota were subject to much debate; and the law that was passed by the end of February 2012 changed the electoral law and cancelled the quota. The number of voters and candidates demonstrated the determination of women to participate in the elections: 634 women ran for elections, out of which 549 through party representations list and 85 women dared to run as independent candidates (majoritarian system). Libyan women defied many challenges and obstacles that hindered their participation in political life, mostly cultural, social and economic, confirming the birth of a new Libya where women struggle for their political rights.

Despite these challenges, 33 women won the elections (representing 16.5%) of the legislative authority. Out of these, 32 women won through PR lists and only one through the majoritarian system, which is an indication of the extent of challenges facing Libyan women in a fairly conservative society.

However, the political situation is still unstable and the post revolution Constitution is being drafted. Though the constitutional declaration in article 6 stipulates that "...the State shall guarantee for woman all opportunities which allow her to participate entirely and actively in political, economic and social spheres"; and article 7 stipulates that " ...Human rights and basic freedoms shall be respected by the State. The state shall commit itself to join the international and regional declarations and charters which protect such rights and freedoms. The State shall endeavour to promulgate new charters which shall honour the human being as being God's successor on Earth..." , and prohibits discrimination on any basis, the transitional government has not yet adopted progressive policies that could encourage women's political participation

and ensure it in the long run. This is evident in the absence of women in the recently established governmental bodies.

Civil society organizations have been the main support for women's political participation during the transition to democracy. CSOs have worked hard at promoting women's political participation by building their capacities through training and leadership programs.

On another level, CSOs, in collaboration with international organizations have also worked towards highlighting the importance of women's participation through advocacy and other tools, and demanding legislations that create an enabling environment for women. In view of the fact that the transitional governments abstain from implementing policies that are not popular with the people and will probably go along with the dominant perception of the traditional roles of the two sexes, it is vital that CSOs be a strong driving power for change.

The same challenges exist in the three countries, the most important of which, is that equality between men and women is regarded as just another problem, while it should be considered as one of the main factors for solving Libya's problems.



**Tunisia:** Presentation by *Ms. Kolthoum Badreddin* , Chair, Committee on General Legislation, National Constituent Assembly.

The Tunisian Constitution of 1959 provided equal rights for both men and women, including political participation without discrimination; and the personal status laws and the judiciary in Tunisia were relatively progressive. Yet, the ruling autocratic one-party regime and the prevailing corruption discouraged political participation for both men and women. However, the flaws of the electoral laws that regulated the political process affected women more than men.

Women participated actively during the revolution and during the transition process to maintain the achievements of Tunisian women acquired in the past.

After the Revolution, the 1959 Constitution was suspended and a new National Constituent Assembly was established to draft a new constitution. Civil society organizations played an important role in safeguarding women's human rights and were instrumental in bringing about the issuance of decree No. 35 in 2011 which ensures parity and gender equality in public life.

Though women are not adequately represented in decision-making (only 2 ministers in the cabinet and one secretary of state), their participation in the National Constituent Assembly is effective (36%). A powerful female block of all the parties in the Assembly was formed to advocate for an independent Electoral Management Board (EMB), gender balance in the draft constitution and in the legislations, currently being drafted and the observance of women's human rights and gender equality. A fairer representation of women in politics was recommended through the use of vertical and horizontal parity, to encourage women's political participation at all levels of the society. An additional recommendation was made for preventing violence against women. If the support of the media, civil society and international organizations can be secured, as well as the initiation of a national dialogue, women's rights in society and their participation in political life can be easily advocated/promoted.

### 3.3 – FORUM SESSIONS

#### *Session 1– Electoral Arrangements to Enhance Women’s Representation*

##### Key issues:

- How can special measures enhance women’s representation in elected bodies? Quotas, reserved seats, parity law, zebra list, other measures
- Why are special measures necessary to guarantee women’s representation in elected bodies?
- Review and analysis of the transitional special measures adopted for the first post-revolution parliamentary elections in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia



##### **Presentation** on “How Can Special Measures Enhance Women’s Substantive Representation”

- *Dr. Ali Abdul Jabar*, UNDP Electoral Project

Women in the Arab countries represent half the population; hence, their participation was a major factor for the success of the Arab Spring Revolutions, raising their expectations for increased presence in decision-making structures and a fairer representation in electoral bodies. Nevertheless, international experience shows that in many countries in the world, women are unlikely to be represented in parliament in meaningful numbers due to several factors, mainly cultural and social. Therefore, special measures have to be introduced in the design of electoral systems to enhance and guarantee women’s representation in elected bodies.

representation in electoral bodies. Nevertheless, international experience shows that in many countries in the world, women are unlikely to be represented in parliament in meaningful numbers due to several factors, mainly cultural and social. Therefore, special measures have to be introduced in the design of electoral systems to enhance and guarantee women’s representation in elected bodies.

In **Egypt**, during the former regime, the electoral system established a quota of 64 seats representing 12.5% of the total number of seats in the People’s Assembly. In addition, the former President had the prerogative to appoint ten members to the People’s Assembly, of whom five were women. Following the revolution, the parliamentary election law was amended, *inter alia*, cancelling the quota for women. Eventually a mixed parallel system was adopted, allocating 75% seats to proportional representation lists (PR) and 25% to the majoritarian system. The only measure introduced in favour of women was placing at least one woman candidate on every list, yet it did not specify her rank on the list. This often led to women candidates being at the bottom of the lists, which resulted in a mere 2% representation of women in the new parliament.

In **Tunisia**, the picture was different. During the previous regime, a mixed system “ where the block vote was used to elect 80% of the seats in 25 constituencies (all won by the ruling party in 2009) and 20% were allocated using proportional representation to the other parties...” There were no special measures in the electoral law to promote women’s representation. Yet the 2009 Parliament had 59 women members (28%). However, under the autocratic regime there was no significant participation in politics for either men or women. After the Revolution, the election of 2011 for the National Constituent Assembly, Tunisia chose the PR system, and the authorities demanded that all lists contesting the elections needed to alternate men and women, using the zebra system, yet without referring to women’s rank on the list. Given



the high number of competing lists and the fragmented nature of the results, the effect was that 59 women were elected to the Constituent Assembly. Tunisian women were disappointed despite the fact that this result was the highest among the three countries and six per cent more than the world average.

In **Libya**, the electoral law adopted finally was a mixed parallel system (such as Egypt's), with 80 seats out of a total of 200 to be elected by PR lists, and 120 by a majoritarian system. Libya used "vertical" parity (as was the case in Tunisia) and a "horizontal" parity – meaning that political entities putting forward more than one list in different constituencies needed to ensure the alternation between men and women candidates at the top of these lists. Women won 32 seats (16.5%) through the PR lists and one seat only through the majoritarian system.

A comparative analysis of the experiences in the three countries shows that without special measures, women have little chance of being elected through the majoritarian system. The introduction of "vertical" parity and "horizontal" parity was needed to ensure that there was alternation between men and women candidates on top of the lists.

As they look forward to prepare for future elections, the three countries should revisit their electoral system, particularly in regard to parliamentary elections. They should reflect on the effectiveness of the measures undertaken and explore others that could guarantee a more meaningful representation for women in parliament.

The **Case Study** of the 2008 parliamentary elections in Nepal, presented by **Mr. Neel Uprety**, former Acting Chairman of the Electoral Commission of Nepal, highlighted that during these elections, special, economical and easy to implement measures were applied i.e.: proportionality on PR lists, inclusiveness of specified groups (women), and geographic representation with positive discrimination policy for supporting other specific or minority groups. These measures were acceptable to political parties and to the people. Though electoral systems cannot address all problems, however, they have to take into consideration the following basic prerequisites a) ensuring multiparty democracies; b) applying easy to manage systems that enable participation c) observing transparency at all times; d) ensuring that voters should know whom they are voting for and the reasons for their choice. Most importantly, electoral systems should be sensitive in addressing the political, social, and ethnic issues of the deprived segments of society.



The **discussions** which took place during the first session, moderated by **Dr. Fatima Al Abbasi**, General National Congress, Libya, are summarized hereunder:

Prior to the revolutions, the political engagement by both men and women in the three countries was limited; political parties were few, and the active ones even fewer (with the exception of the ruling parties). Furthermore, the prevailing patriarchal culture, combined with women's own perception of their role in society hindered their participation in public life and politics. The cosmetic attempts of the religious radical parties, presently ruling, to appear impartial by including women on their lists, were in fact to exploit them to propagate their patriarchal ideas, as in the case of Egypt. After the Revolution, with the rise of the conservative hardliners, and though much more needed, the quota system – which was not acceptable by the

Arab community – was cancelled, leaving women's aspirations and rights unfulfilled. As the political climate is generally not favourable to women, other solutions to enhance women's political participation would have to be sought and imposed. Many participants indicated that the means to achieve an adequate representation for women in parliament would be through the introduction of a constitutional provision ensuring their adequate representation, proposing a 30% quota for women as a start. Alternatively, political parties should be required to take special measures that ensure more participation of women in the party, as well as a high rank on the party list, e.g. zebra, zipper, etc<sup>5</sup>. Proper legislative measures have to be undertaken; and electoral laws have to state clearly that women's participation in public life is a human right and not a gift. However, such legislation should be supported by a societal conviction and the participation by both men and women in public and political life should be based on efficiency and competence.

Furthermore, as feminist movements and CSOs proved to be key players in the election process in the three countries, their role as pressure and lobbying groups for women's participation should be enhanced and their lobbying endeavours should be directed also to political party leaders. As changing perceptions and attitudes is a long-term process, the work of CSOs should focus on raising awareness on the importance of women's participation and should also promote the concept of citizenship.



On their part, women candidates are required to reach out to the local communities and villages and work with local women, taking into consideration the disparity between the grass roots and political levels. In this respect, neither poverty nor wealth affect women's ability to participate, it is only their dedication that counts.

Other factors that have to be taken into consideration to counter the patriarchal attitudes that do not favour women's political participation are mobilizing the media to effectively sensitize the society to promote the concept of gender equality, and to ensure that more qualitative and quantitative indicators are used to clearly highlight the real productive role of women not just their reproductive role.

As changing the cultural, societal, religious and rigid mindsets to the advantage of women is a long-term process, there is urgency for the three countries to seize the momentum of the Revolutions to take rapid and appropriate measures. They should revisit their electoral systems for future elections, assess the effectiveness of the above measures and explore other models that have successfully worked in other societies, to guarantee a more meaningful representation of women in parliament. The Kuwaiti experience, where women's voices were heard and where they were able to win seats in parliament, in the absence of a quota or special legislation, was due to their perseverance in their campaigns, their mutual support for one another, and with the support of men, was cited as a success story worth studying.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> In the German system, party lists are not accepted unless they include women

<sup>6</sup> In the 2009 elections in Kuwait, 4 women candidates succeeded to be elected, without organized political parties supporting them or a quota system.

## **Session 2. Women's Participation as Candidates - Regional and International perspectives**

### **Key issues**

- Challenges for women candidates in the region
- The role of political parties in candidate selection - internal voting mechanisms in political parties
- Role of political financing
- Role of the media in campaigns
- Role of civil society, specifically women NGOs and international organizations, in supporting women candidates



**Presentation** on «Experience of Women Candidates in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia» by *Ms. Soulef Guessoum*, Parliamentary Specialist, UNDP Electoral Support Project - Tunisia

Democracy cannot be complete without the effective participation of women, and this was demonstrated in the three countries during the Arab Spring Revolutions, where their strong presence contributed to ending the dictatorships. However once the protests were over, women found themselves still struggling to achieve a fair and adequate political representation, as stipulated in the international conventions and treaties that call for equal rights for women in all aspects of life. These stipulations call for taking all measures to prevent violence against women which hinders their participation in public life. The purpose of this presentation was to highlight the specific challenges and opportunities for women candidates, following the post revolution parliamentary elections in the three countries.

Among the most important obstacles facing women's participation in elections is the fact that political parties in the region are not sufficiently aware of the advantage of mainstreaming gender and nominating women candidates. The requirement for PR lists, that at least one woman be part of a list in Egypt, and parity in Tunisia and Libya actually forced political parties to nominate women. In Tunisia and Libya, political parties were critical of the measure, stressing that in conservative rural areas, it was hard to find enough women to become candidates. In Egypt and Libya, there were no special measures to encourage women candidates in the majoritarian races. With the prevailing societal, religious, economic and cultural factors as well as the absence of women from decision making positions, it would be unlikely for women to be elected. Such conditions compromised women's ability to compete equally with men as candidates; also political participation may be widely inaccessible to working class and rural women.

In addition, the spread of conservatism made it difficult for women to properly undertake their electoral campaigns. In Libya, the insistence of some conservative parties to minimize women's participation violates the commitment to refrain from discrimination on basis of sex.

The limited number of women role models in positions of political leadership resulted in the lack of confidence in many women's abilities in public participation.



Moreover, time was not sufficient for strategic planning, capacity building and preparation. There was limited or no access for women candidates to financial resources and information. In addition, media coverage of women candidates was not adequate.

The strong role of the civil society in promoting the political participation of women should be further strengthened. The media, the most powerful instrument in shaping public opinion is urged to address the issue of the stereotypical portrayal of women that limits their participation to their role in the family, and instead to promote their role as candidates. Therefore, in the three countries, women as well as policy-makers should address obstacles on the constitutional, legislative, cultural and social levels. The structure of political parties should also promote women's citizenship rights. Finally, and most importantly, developing the capacity of women as political candidates is of paramount importance.



In a **Case Study** presentation, *Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne*, Member of the UK House of Lords, EU and Council of Europe Parliaments, shared her considerable knowledge and experience of more than two decades as a woman candidate, recounting her political career, which started by her election to the House of Commons, with a constituency of 80,000 persons, of whom the core block consisted of farmers. This was followed by her election twice to the European Parliament (representing over 10 million voters from 27 national parliaments, each with

different complexities and sensitivities), and thereafter the Parliament of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, and her appointment for life by the Queen to the House of Lords, the latter two being honorary appointments. In her work at the House of Lords, she chose as theme the Millennium Development Goals, the MDGS, and its challenges that require commitment and farsightedness. In the Parliament of the European Council, the work is based on adherence to the international UN Human Rights instruments and on the principles of equal rights for both men and women. Her responsibilities as parliamentarian included, inter alia, observing and monitoring elections in various parts of the world in Asia, Europe, the Middle East and Africa, interacting with women, both candidates and voters in polling stations. During the course of her career, she had the opportunity to meet eminent women politicians and leaders, who are role models to others, such as Catherine Ashton, Hillary Clinton, Angela Merkel, Judge Hakki - the first woman Judge in Iraq – and Sarah Akbar - the first woman to run an oil company in Kuwait. These women are ready to help others. Successful women politicians have to mentor younger women candidates. In this respect, women committees can be very helpful in breaking barriers hindering women's political participation. The support of women in power, as well as the support of powerful men, can achieve change.

Her advice to women candidates was reaching out to others, women and men, giving and receiving assistance, and engaging in politics as a group in order to maximize the chances of success. Though it is easier now for women to run for elections, they still face challenges, and criticism by the media, political parties, and even their own electorate itself; citing the example of Mrs. Thatcher, who was an accomplished figure, yet she did not escape criticism, and hardly anybody says thank you.. Politics is a team game which needs the support of both men and women. In addition, elected women need to be empowered to become decision makers, through long-term capacity building, strategic planning, economic empowerment and legal freedom. It must be remembered that the most important consideration in the entire political

process is the enforcement of the rule of law. Therefore, law is the key, and as laws are made in parliament, the presence of women in parliament is essential, as laws made by only half the population will seldom be good laws.

The **discussions** of the second session, moderated by *Dr. Ali Abdul Jabbar*, Electoral project, UNDP Egypt, are summarized hereunder:

Women have equal human rights as citizens, and though their participation was a decisive factor in the success of the Revolutions in the three countries; yet, when it comes to actual representation on party lists, priority goes to men and women are not on the top of the lists. Furthermore, the issue of competence is only raised when women are concerned. Women's presence in electoral bodies in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia is merely "symbolic" denoting that they are not perceived as equal to men in rights and duties. Only when women are granted their full rights, can participation in public life be truly meaningful. Though a number of civil political parties claim to believe in the role women in parliament, in fact they do not really have complete faith in their abilities; let alone the perception of the radical religious parties of the rights and role of women. In fact, when it comes to actual practice, women are only there for cosmetic effects and do not make it to the top of party lists. Therefore, principles should be established regarding the participation of women. The systems applied in Tunisia and Libya were more effective than in Egypt, where future elections will witness an even fewer representation of women, not adequately reflecting their number or their worth. Furthermore, the contested draft Constitution of Egypt which, though not discriminating against women, does not stipulate any rights or role for them in society. Article 10, concerning motherhood and childhood and the reconciliation between women's role in the family, and their role in public life is seen as a ploy that could jeopardize their rights to employment.

Another major challenge faced by women is the lack of confidence in women candidates by both male and unfortunately women voters. Addressing this issue needs education and awareness raising on all levels, among candidates and voters. In this respect, CSOs, parties, women's groups in parties, and pressure groups, can play a role in motivating women to vote for women. The media, both at national and local levels, can greatly contribute to improving the image of women while the educational curricula should reflect the true worth of women in society. Such efforts will facilitate women's access to decision-making posts and support their rights to an active role in society.

To promote effective participation in elections, women candidates were advised to avoid the majoritarian system as their chances of winning under this system are very slim, as the election process is a huge machinery that requires considerable resources. Other important questions, such as addressing the issue of violence against women, particularly in the political field, and ensuring the fundamental freedoms and equality of women were also raised. An important aspect of training for political participation for women, deemed very useful, was the observation and monitoring of elections which are of great benefit not only to women candidates, but also to parties and governments for improved performance and in learning to address corruption.

Putting all the above considerations into a comprehensive legal and political strategic framework, that ensures supportive networking with all stakeholders and works at providing necessary resources, will achieve the desired quantitative and qualitative goals of sustainable par-

ticipation of women in political life.

### **Session 3. Women's Participation as Voters: Challenges and Opportunities**

#### **Key issues**

- Enhanced participation of women voters: where and why?
- Role of voter outreach/education
- Role of the electoral administration and other support – outreach to women voters, registration/ID campaigns, polling arrangements

**Presentation** on “Enhanced Participation of Women as Voters in the Three Parliamentary Elections: Elements for a Comparative Analysis” – *Ms. Shahrazad Maghrabi*, President, Libya Women Forum

During the political transition in the Arab Region, women have been active and engaged participants as drivers of change; therefore, the purpose of the presentation is to review the characteristics of the increased participation of women as voters.



Women's participation in Egypt and Tunisia during the previous regimes was weak, but so was the male participation due to the lack of trust in the process. In Libya, women never had the opportunity to exercise their citizenship rights until the National Congress Elections in 2012. The expectations of having a genuine and credible post-revolution process increased the interest of the eligible voting population in the three countries.

Under the previous regimes, Egyptian and Tunisian voters registered through their respective ministries of interior, but the registers were perceived as incomplete and subject to political manipulation. For the post-revolution electoral processes, both countries decided to abolish/change the system. In Egypt, the voting system was changed and is now derived from the national ID database. In Tunisia, the national ID database was not deemed suitable as the address information was not reliable enough. As a result, voters were allowed to update their address and choose a polling centre. The electoral authorities permitted those who could not update their data to vote in special centres set up for them.

In Libya, since there was no previous or suitable national database for compiling a voters' register, it was decided that a stand-alone voter registration exercise would be conducted.

Women's participation in the three parliamentary elections was extremely encouraging. It is clear that the confidence in the process was a major factor in the strong voter turnout, particularly for women voters.

In a **Case Study** presentation *Ms. Ilham Abdul Wahab*, Director General of the Women's Sector at the Independent Yemeni Electoral Supreme Commission – a Showcase of Specific Programs : Yemen, described how the Yemeni experience was different from that of the three countries.

The focus was to encourage women to run for elections. Upon the stepping down of the ex-President, elections were organized and an operation plan to push women forward was developed. As a large percentage of women in Yemen were not fully literate, it was imperative to introduce them to the voting procedures. In cooperation with a large number of CSOs, the



content was simplified for women who were encouraged to vote using their personal IDs. By working with the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Religious Endowments, the program reached out to the remote rural areas.

Through awareness raising programs, 36 Election Management Boards staff/electoral administrators were trained by UNDP. A task force was set up for an electoral campaign and the media support was in the form of electoral manuals, promotional materials, and products (t-shirts, books, etc.) that were used to communicate the message to women. The training was conducted in Socotra Island. Support activities to enhance these objectives and directions achieved positive field results. These included activating the role of preachers and women religious coordinators in support of political participation of women and their role in the early presidential elections. The religious coordinators, helped by two young women each, reached out to other women in their communities, raising their political, social and health awareness, which contributed to their motivation to vote.



The **discussions** during the third session, moderated by **Dr. Hoda Badran**, President, Egyptian Feminist Union, are summarized hereunder:

In the three countries of the Arab Spring Revolutions, the various aspects of women's participation need to be examined and analyzed in depth to define why people vote and what influences their voting choices. However, qualitative research carried out by CSOs on the role that political parties play in the electoral process is available, covering the reasons and factors that determine voting, including why women do not vote for women candidates and why do they refrain from voting altogether. The Centre for Arab Women Training and Research (CAWTAR) in Tunisia also conducts research in this area. Furthermore, as economic independence has been identified as one of the enabling factors for women's increased participation in public life, efforts should be made to promote women's economic empowerment to help increase their chances in the next elections. It was recommended that plans towards achieving this goal should start immediately and be pursued consistently. Funding should be highlighted as a vital tool in elections as candidates need both moral and financial support.

It was further recommended to link the Electoral Management Boards in the three countries to an institution to work closely together to raise awareness in the remotest parts, thus providing additional support in further enhancing the role of NGOs in these endeavours. A comparative study on the role of NGOs in the Arab Spring countries was suggested.

Participants indicated that time was needed by all stakeholders, particularly those on the local level, to assimilate the electoral process and the interplay of the various political factors that determine the election results. At the same time they emphasized the importance of enhancing the motivation of women; and urging governmental and civil society organizations to keep this momentum by focusing on strategic planning, and on the importance of networking.

The importance of sharing best practices, particularly those relating to awareness raising, capacity building for women candidates, the content of the messages that motivate voters and the importance of coordination among partners and stakeholders was highlighted. The need to identify enabling factors, such as issuance of IDs, as well as pitfalls, such as placing women

at the bottom of party lists, was further stressed. Recommendations were made to encourage NGOs and political parties to work closely together, to overcome the negative attitudes of conservative parties who are neither supportive of, nor fair to women's participation.

Mechanisms to regulate and coordinate the cooperation between governmental organizations, women machineries, NGOs, political parties need to be developed at central and local levels as they are conducive to improving the level and quality of women's participation. It is also essential that both men and women hold their elected representative accountable for upholding their interests and for carrying their voices to the authorities concerned.

Participants agreed that the Revolutions in the three countries provided a unique opportunity for women's participation as full citizens. However, if women do not reach decision-making positions, little will change.

## Second Day: 10 December 2012

### *Session 4. Gender Sensitivity in Electoral Administration*

#### Key issues:

- International good practices – gender policies, how to ensure gender balance in selection of members of the EMB
- Egypt, Libya and Tunisia experiences
- Other regional and international experiences



**Presentation** on “Gender Sensitivity in Electoral Administration: Egypt, Libya and Tunisia (2011/2012)” by *Mr. Omar Boubakri*, Legal Adviser, UNDP Electoral Support Project, Tunisia

During the Arab Spring Revolutions, women were at the forefront of events as agents of change, so it only stands to reason that they should play an important role in the post revolution elections. However, the overall situation in the first parliamentary elections in the three countries after the Revolutions witnessed weak or distinctly minor representation of women in the high levels of decision making in the government structures, and in the reform process currently underway, despite the surge in civic participation during and immediately after 2011 Revolutions, and the visibility of women as active participants in the political space. Though Libya and Tunisia have a higher representation of women in parliament than Egypt, women in the three countries are not adequately represented in the decision making process. This was a missed opportunity for women to take leadership roles and presence in the government structures, as the current constitutional and legal provisions do not provide sufficient support for women. It is crucial, therefore, to overcome relevant legal and judicial obstacles in order to ensure the participation of women in the democratization process. Women were only present in the polling stations: In Egypt and Libya, there were special polling stations for women which might have encouraged the high women turnout, particularly in rural and conservative areas.



In addition, in Tunisia, and particularly in Libya, the electoral management bodies took steps to pro-actively advise political parties/entities in terms of the registration of candidate lists, to ensure that the “parity” clause was complied with. However, the issue of gender mainstreaming in the composition of the electoral management bodies still face obstacles. Qualitative and quantitative statistics are needed to provide information about the social obstacles that have to be overcome to ensure women’s participation in electoral management processes.

The importance of women in democratic governance, including electoral management should be emphasized and efforts should be strengthened to ensure that electoral administrations are gender-sensitive. In this regard, international experience shows that establishing a gender unit within the electoral management bodies, as well as training electoral administrators on gender and elections could be helpful in mainstreaming gender sensitivity in the electoral administrations of the three countries.



In a **Case Study** presentation *Ms. Thoko Mpumlwana*, Former Deputy Chairperson of Electoral Commission of South Africa and Current Deputy Chairperson of the Commission for Gender Equality on South Africa, described the experience of South Africa.

**South Africa** is a society of various races, ethnic, and religious groups, united in diversity; and though it is a very young state, 44% of the members of parliament are women. The Electoral Commission of South Africa was established by the Electoral Commission Act 51 of 1996 to ensure that all citizens of voting age are on the common voters’ roll and to guarantee equal treatment for all citizens including women. Political party lists do not have quotas, but parties are encouraged to ensure women’s participation as voters, commissioners and voting staff (70% of voting staff and 90% of presiding officers are women). The Constitutional Mandate affirms that the Commission for Gender Equality in South Africa must promote the respect, protection, development and attainment of gender equality. Though there are no special articles in the Constitution regarding people with disability, their rights are taken into consideration and 2% are allocated for them in any structure.

To encourage women to participate in elections, facilities are provided, such as mobile voting stations in remote areas, flexible voting hours to ensure the security of women voters, and protection of women journalists by a code of conduct.

All electoral data is disaggregated by gender, rural or urban and age to facilitate the electoral management.

The **discussions** during the fourth session, moderated by *Judge Hesham Mokhtar*, Senior Member of Secretariat, High Judicial Electoral Commission, Egypt, are summarized hereunder:

Despite women’s participation as active partners in the Revolution, and their strong presence as voters in the referendum and in the parliamentary and presidential elections, yet, they were neither included in decision-making positions nor were adequately present on the political scene, despite the empha-



sis laid on the importance of women's involvement in politics. Was this due to the emergence of the religious conservative trends? In the context of these trends, can women hope to become strong and effective partners in decision-making, as vice-president, cabinet ministers and can they attain a higher percentage of representation in parliament?

In **Tunisia**, the 27% representation of women was the result of the implementation of the parity system, and not the result of progressive attitudes. There are indications of a regressive trend to apply the parity system, especially in constitutional institutions and it is feared that in the forthcoming elections this system would become a mere text in the law and women might be excluded from these institutions. Tunisian women, who had already reached a position in elections almost equal to that of men, hoped that the implementation of the parity system would ensure their presence in these institutions. To secure their gains, they are now submitting a demand for equal representation in the EMBs to the General Assembly of the Supreme Elections Authority. This move represents a positive step towards the initiation of a democratic dialogue within the Legislative Council. However, some participants were of the opinion that the demand for parity should be viewed within the broader context of comprehensive social development.

A number of questions were raised about the EMBs, their functions, responsibilities and scope of work. The various aspects of the concept of the EMB as a source of information, analysis, research and knowledge leading to social justice and empowerment of women, were examined and compared with the concept of the EMB as an entity responsible for elections administration and management. In the latter instance taking some factors, such as levels of authorities and competencies within the EMB, the financial, human, logistical and other resources required for their efficient operations, have to be taken into account. Another related issue was also debated concerning whether EMBs should be established either as ad-hoc or as permanent entities. Participants were of the opinion that the benefits to be gained from the accumulation of knowledge, experience and capacity building of its cadres, including fair distribution of tasks over years, would no doubt contribute to the consolidation of the status of the EMBs as main strongholds of democracy and in improving their performance in running fair and democratic elections nationwide.

Discussions also revolved around the fact that the Revolutions presented an opportunity for women to be proactive, to pursue being part of the decision-making process and to be part of the policy formulation of their governments and determining the course of women's political participation. However, their endeavours were not successful and unless women themselves pursue their efforts towards this goal, nothing will change or change will be slow and not up to expectations.

Much remains to be done in this respect and this is a long-term process. Now more than ever, after the revolutions, efforts need to be stepped up to secure women's presence in the whole decision-making and electoral processes through appropriate measures. The audience unanimously agreed that the importance of having a balanced representation of both men women at decision-making levels and in politics cannot be overemphasized.

## **Session 5: The Role of CSOs and International Organizations in Supporting Women's Participation**

### **Key issues**

- Role of women organizations in supporting the electoral process (civic education and awareness raising of voters/electoral observation)
- Egypt, Libya and Tunisia experiences
- Other regional and international experiences

**Presentation** on “Women’s Organizations’ Engagement in Support of the Electoral Process in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia” by *Dr. Maya Morsy*, Country Coordinator, UN Women, Egypt

1. Civil society organizations in the three countries were responsive to women’s needs in this unique period of time. They played an important part in enhancing women’s political participation through building trust, increasing plurality in civic dialogue and raising awareness on important issues. Their valuable contribution also covered disseminating information, creating a platform for dialogue and monitoring the entire electoral process.
2. In Egypt, Libya and Tunisia, women’s organizations have limited resources and autonomy, particularly compared with groups that are already well established and consequently better positioned to help shape dialogue and decision-making. Women are therefore struggling to take their due place amongst transitional decision-makers. The current democratization process has the potential to either increase women’s political participation to unprecedented levels or, alternatively, to see them marginalized.
3. More than ever, women’s groups are encouraged now to establish strong movements through national, regional and international broad networks and alliances to support the gender dimension in democratization agendas, and implement wide-reaching campaigns calling for greater social, economic and political rights for women. To better identify and assess the impediments and challenges facing women’s political participation, women’s NGOs could also conduct research and studies to shed light on these challenges.
4. Women’s civil society groups can help in instituting mechanisms, through sensitization and awareness campaigns, to promote national commitments to gender equality.
5. In conclusion, CSOs role proved to be crucial in the three countries in creating alliances and coalitions, promoting women’s political participation and building women’s leadership skills, as candidates and voters.



In a **Case Study** presentation by *Dr. Nemata Majeks-Walker*, Founder and First President, The 50/50 Group, described the experience of Sierra Leone.

The 50/50 Group of **Sierra Leone** is a non-partisan campaign calling for the involvement of more women in all aspects of political and public life. It aims to change public perception of women in politics, encourage and empower women through training and advocacy



to seek and attain public office and participate in politics and public life. The 50/50 Group promoted the zipper system (one man-one woman) in political representation and sensitized women about the importance of being represented in parliament. It engendered the parliament and built the capacity of women as voters, candidates and members of the electoral boards. It mobilized the support of the media, engendered the registration process, produced a Women's Manifesto and engaged in intensive capacity building and advocacy programs through culture-sensitive programs and materials. This provided forums for discussions and other promotional methods that reach people.

Their activities are the result of strategic planning and a commitment to succeed. A draft gender equality bill is ready for submission to the new Parliament of Sierra Leone.

The **discussions** of the fifth session, moderated by *Dr. Inas Abouyoussef*, Professor, Journalism Department, Faculty of Mass Communication, Cairo University, are summarized hereunder:



A question was posed concerning the effectiveness of the role of feminist NGOs on the ground, noting that they needed to have proper terms of reference, adequate funding, and political support. The importance of their role in educating and supporting women was unanimously emphasized. The quota was deemed a vital tool to ensure adequate participation of women, and does not take away from the rights and privileges of men. In Libya, the application of the parity, both horizontal and vertical, ensured a fair representation in the recent elections; and for future elections, a quota of 30% for women will be demanded. Women were encouraged to communicate with the NGOs active in participation in order to have access to information regarding the concerns of the constituency and in order to build a popular base.

This will enhance women's participation in the broader sense of the term. The current legal framework is generally perceived as not enabling and the political parties do not encourage women's participation.

Questions revolved around the means by which CSOs can promote women's participation as voters, candidates and as elected representatives and how to overcome related challenges.

Building alliances and coalitions among CSOs to mutually reinforce each other was proposed for networking, exchanging experience and knowledge, sharing success stories and lessons learned with one another, to arrive at a shared understanding of their mission. These activities can shed light on some of the important challenges that women face and how lobbying, advocacy and "speaking as one" could lead to securing the support needed to achieve their goals. Networking should be broadened to include development partners, as advocating women human rights is the responsibility of the whole community. Unless a clear and defined legislation is in place, CSOs will not be able to support women, whether as voters or candidates. The role of CSOs in elections observation and monitoring can be a useful tool in building a quantitative and qualitative database on women's participation in the electoral process. In this connexion, two important reports were jointly prepared in Tunisia by the Women Democratic Association and the Human Rights Association. Such valuable studies can be replicated in the three countries, shared and used as a knowledge base to be regularly updated. Furthermore, participants stressed the need to develop and enhance the capacity and potentials of

women elected to parliament. Sensitization on legislations, elections procedures, training on the ground including grassroots levels, and the production of handbooks and manuals have to be an ongoing exercise and should include all levels and all relevant entities involved in the political participation process nationwide. In this respect, the Sierra Leone experience was commended, where women neither relied on men nor on legislations, but depended on themselves, thus demonstrating the strength of women as citizens in the society.

Most of the discussions confirmed that the legal framework is in fact the first step towards achieving gender equality and that the vital role of the media in the promotion of women's political participation should be enhanced through sensitization and capacity building on women's rights and issues to judiciously support the best candidates, as reflected in experience of Sierra Leone.

An important aspect that needs to be stressed is to address and convince men, as well as religious leaders, that by supporting women social development can be achieved.

**Roundtable discussions:** Presentations of Lessons-Learned and Way Forward by Country: Participants were divided into 3 working groups:

**EGYPT** - facilitated by *Dr. Ali El Sawi*, President of the Parliamentary Programme - Cairo University

The group identified challenges and obstacles facing the entire political participation process in Egypt, both men and women, but affecting women more specifically, as falling under the following categories



### **Challenges:**

#### **1. Women's Participation as candidates:**

- The absence of a real political will, before the revolution, for an active engagement of citizens in political participation prevailed, despite the efforts made to increase women's political participation. After the revolution, and despite the effective participation of women as voters, Egyptian women still struggle for their rights which are being threatened.
- The absence of inclusive constitutional and legal frameworks that can support the representation and participation of women.
- Women's limited membership in political parties and minimal involvement in parties' activities. Furthermore, parties are generally reluctant to nominate women on their lists, and when nominated, they occupy a low ranking position on the list.
- The current economic conditions, the high rate of illiteracy and poverty, particularly among women, make it difficult for many women to engage in political participation, particularly running for elections.
- Some factors that limit the participation of women are due, to women's negative self-perception, their low ambition and their inadequate political awareness and experience.
- The prevailing patriarchal culture, both at societal and political levels, inclines society to not be as receptive to women's political participation, particularly conservative and religious parties.

## 2. The Electoral Management Board (EMB)

At the level of the EMB, the most important general challenges were represented by the apathy of the parties in ensuring adequate political participation of women. After the revolution, another factor that came into play was the weakened security situation prevailing in the country, discouraging women from running for elections.

At a level more specific to the EMB, some of the more important challenges (in addition to the absence of women from its structures) that needed to be tackled were:

- Inadequate and impartial administrative support to the judges.
- The need to facilitate the role of the observers throughout the whole electoral process.
- The need to monitor the financing of the electoral campaigns.
- The need to effectively resolve electoral infringements
- The need to address exploitation of public utilities and financial resources.

The situation is further complicated by the absence of clear regulations governing electoral campaigning addressing gender bias. In addition, social factors and cultural attitudes negatively affect the participation of women and have a strong impact on the election process and its results: e.g. society, the political trends, the opposition, the lack of respect of the opponents' publicity, the negative counter propaganda, not forgetting the tribal factor.

### **Recommendations:**

- Design an electoral system that allows proportional representation, through special measures, such as allocating a quota for women in the parliament, or within the parties, or adopting the parity, (zebra/zipper, both horizontal and vertical) systems can provide a fair chance for women to get elected.
- Secure a stronger support for women from the parties.
- Increase the number of parliament seats in order to diminish the size of constituencies, thus improving women's chances of being elected.
- Improve logistics such as: the location and distribution of the polling stations, the time and the duration of the voting process.
- Build and continuously update a geographically and gender disaggregated database of eligible voters, as this information would be very useful to candidates to enable them to adequately assess the voting force in their respective constituencies.
- Seek the support of the media in raising awareness on the importance of women's participation as candidates and voters.
- Enhance the supportive role of CSO's in raising women's awareness and building their capacities is essential to increase their self-confidence and consequently their political participation.

For parties:

- Apply a quota for women candidates on party lists, or the special measures (parity, zebra, etc.) that can ensure them a seat in parliament.
- Support women in financing their campaigns.
- Support women candidates through mentoring and capacity building.
- Call on the media, the civil society and men to support women in their campaigns

- Promote the involvement of women members in party's activities.

For the Electoral Management Board and other concerned bodies:

- Provide the required logistical arrangements: e.g. the number of constituencies, their location, the time and duration of the voting process.
- Provide the EMBs with effective administrative support to enable them to better carry out their duties. The EMBs should have a clear organizational structure, defined functions and responsibilities and should be gender-sensitive. Adequate human and financial resources should be made available to them. They also need to be backed by solid constitutional legislations so that they can exercise their tasks of organizing, monitoring elections, campaigns spending, and dealing effectively with infringements.

For the Society:

CSOs should consolidate their efforts to support women's participation, through awareness raising and capacity building.

The media is called upon to highlight the important role of women in society by presenting positive images of their contribution to the development of the country.

**LIBYA** COUNTRY PRESENTATION- facilitated by *Dr. Rida Al Tuluby*, President, "Together We Build" Organisation

The group agreed on the following:

#### **The challenges:**

With regard to legislation:

- Insufficient provisions in the legislations on the electoral process.
- Absence of a legal provision to ensure women's representation in the Supreme Electoral Administration (positive representation).
- The absence of a legislation to ensure positive representation of women in the majoritarian system.
- The absence of laws regulating political parties.
- Non-compliance with the timetable in relation to the electoral process.
- The geographical distribution of constituencies which can lead to the exclusion of women in some areas from voting or running as candidates.
- The lack of supervision over the registration of women voters which can lead to the inability of some women to register and vote in some constituencies.
- The inability of many women to participate in the electoral process due to the difficulty of providing proof of their identity.

With regard to awareness raising, the following factors had a significant impact on the effective participation::

- The prevailing social and cultural inherited traditions.
- The lack of adequate training for women candidates (such as campaign management, program development, etc.)
- Inadequate awareness raising of both men and women voters.
- The Media (radio / TV / press / Internet): The media was not sufficiently attuned to adequately cover the electoral process.

As its course of action for the future, the group emphasized the need to work on the following:

- Putting pressure by the feminist block in the National Congress where needed.
- Creating a channel of communication between the participants in the National Congress and the civil society organizations concerned with women's issues.
- Establishing a Supreme Council for Women under the legislative authorities.
- Addressing the legislative shortcomings regarding the structure of the election law, and stressing the need for positive representation of women.
- Reviewing legislations relating to women, both implemented and not implemented, in line with all the signed international treaties and conventions.
- Facilitating registration procedures for women voters (identification cards - access to polling stations, etc.).
- Putting pressure on the National Congress to issue a law to regulate civil society organizations and to establish a supreme council for CSOs under the legislative authority.
- Abiding by the United Nations Security Council Resolution No. 1325 providing special security measures for the protection of women and their participation in the process of transitional justice and peacemaking.

To address the challenges and work on the implementation of the issues identified, the group made the following recommendations:

- The need to enforce the international conventions and agreements related to women to which each country is party to end gender- based discrimination. This can be achieved through establishing a high-level commission that includes women at the decision-making level with the mandate to promote and ensure women's rights in legislations and future elections. It shall also ensure a fair representation of women in political bodies, such as the parliament and the local elected councils, through allocating a number of seats to women and applying systems for their proportional representation (zebra vertical/horizontal), even in the majoritarian system; and in the case of appointment, the quota should be 35 %. It shall also facilitate procedures for women candidates and voters and increase awareness of their citizenship rights (issuance of ID Cards, etc...).
- The need to further support the role of civil society organizations in raising women's awareness. This role should be clearly specified in laws regulating the functions of the civil society organizations, possibly through a supervising commission.
- The need to emphasize the vital role of the media and the society at large, both men and women, in supporting women's political participation.

**TUNISIA:** Facilitated by *Mr. Said Khezami*, Chief Editor of Tunisian National Television, results presented by Ms. Imen Houimel, General Director of Women and Family Affairs, Ministry of Women and Family Affairs



With regard to the challenges facing women's participation in politics, despite their high representation, the group indicated that gender equality should be mainstreamed at legislative levels in the national plans and budgets. Moreover, horizontal and vertical parity in the electoral administration and legislative measures, to support independent candidates should be secured by law, as the criteria for running and choosing candidates were not clearly specified within political parties.

Other challenges were of procedural, logistical, societal and cultural nature. It should be re-

membered that the revolution came as a surprise and the political parties neither had the time to properly organize their campaigns nor to develop the capacity of candidates, particularly women. Furthermore, independent women candidates did not have access to funds for their campaigns, especially those who campaigned in remote areas. Cultural barriers made it hard for women, especially in rural areas, to be accepted as candidates, even by women; this, in addition to the fact that in general, women politicians carry alone their family commitments, and are often subject to violence. Moreover, the media did not adequately support women candidates and focused more on male candidates. The strongest support came from civil society organizations.

### **Recommendations:**

For supporting and promoting the adequate representation of women in legislative bodies and in decision-making, it is recommended to encourage the establishment of monitoring units for ensuring equal rights for both men and women. The formation of a parliamentary block, similar to that which exists in Germany, may reinforce women's political participation.

At the cultural level, the media has an important role to play in educating citizens on the importance of women's presence in the political field. Research can also be useful in highlighting what factors may be conducive to the election of women, or otherwise.

Finally, the importance of communication and coordination among governmental organizations, CSOs, political parties and citizens should be stressed. The importance of promoting a culture of citizenship and the capacity building of political parties, and candidates, particularly women, cannot be over-emphasized.



**UN Electoral Assistance Division Intervention** “Some thoughts on increasing women's participation” by *Mr. Mansour Sadeghi*, Gender Focal Point, Electoral Assistance Division :

On behalf of the United Nations Electoral Assistance Division (UNEAD), Mr. Sadeghi thanked UNDP and UN Women as the organizers of the event and expressed his honour and privilege to participate in this Forum. Referring to latest available data on global women's political participation across the globe, he noted that though there has been some increase in the global rate for women's participation in parliaments in the past 20 years, the progress has been painfully slow, and uneven. While women comprise more than half of the world's population, the global rate for their representation in parliaments, as of December 2012, was only 20.5 percent. He also noted that supporting national efforts in promoting women's political participation is one of the key issues high on the agenda of the Secretary-General and the UN Focal Point for electoral assistance. EAD representative also stressed that taking the necessary measures to eliminate discrimination against women in political and public life is a legal and political obligation for all State parties to CEDAW and the nations that have endorsed the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. In this regard, reference was also made to other important international legal frameworks, particularly Security Council resolution 1325, which stresses the importance of women's equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and se-



curity; CEDAW General Recommendations 25 that provides key guidance on issues related to temporary special measures (TSMs); and GA resolutions on women's political participation which require countries to review the differential impact of their electoral systems on the political participation of women and to adjust or reform those systems where necessary.

The importance of considering the wider range of TSMs (e.g. outreach or support programs, allocation or reallocation of resources, preferential treatment, targeted recruitment, hiring and promotion, numerical goals connected with time frame, and quota systems) that can be implemented to promote women's political participation; the need for more capacity-building efforts and long term leadership trainings; the significance of having access to gender-disaggregated data in the electoral process; and the need for ensuring that gender becomes part of national debates on all aspects of the electoral process and to work with men and women in all related areas to shift attitudes and perceptions and work towards greater gender equality, were among the other issues highlighted in EAD's statement in the Forum.

### Closing Session:

The Closing Statement of [Mr. Carlos Valenzuela](#), Chief Electoral Adviser, UNDP Electoral Support in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia, is quoted hereunder:

" Good Afternoon.

I have been asked to make the closing statement of this Forum. I am not sure it is very wise that I do so because I have lost my voice and since yesterday I have no voice; but I hope it does not mean that I have lost my vote. And this is a little bit ironic that I lose my voice in this event, especially given that today, the tenth of December, is the International Human Rights' Day and this year's theme is "My Voice Counts", so I hope my lack of voice also counts.

But it is important that the voice of women and men of Egypt, Tunisia and Libya have been heard quite loud and clear during these two days of discussions regarding women's participation in the first very historic parliamentary post revolution elections.

I am a person that likes to speak a lot. When I have the microphone, I cannot be stopped so it is probably a good thing that I lost my voice because that made me listen a lot instead of talking. I listened quite carefully and I was really delighted because I work in the 3 countries on electoral assistance and I think that I know a lot of what is going on and just listening to the depth of discussions I really realize that there is so much out there to learn.

The discussions were really very enriching, they were very fruitful and they were very enlightening.

So, as a Member of the Organizing Committee of this Forum, I am very satisfied because I think that the objectives of this Forum have been achieved and one of the main objectives was to put all of you together to be able to share these different experiences and different knowledge and to learn from each other.

From the United Nations and particularly from the Electoral Assistance in the Arab Region, we like to say that what we bring to the table is our international perspective and the comparative analysis. All the sessions on elections are very political and therefore very locally owned. So we never recommend anything. But we do like to enrich the discussions and bring the inter-

national experience so that local decisions can be made in a much more informed manner. It is not an accident that I am the Head of the UN Electoral Assistance in the three countries of the Arab Spring that came out with early parliamentary elections; because as different as all these countries are, the processes are very specific. But we do believe firmly that all of this and this type of events have confirmed it, that there is a lot to be learned and a lot to be taught by putting together Libya, Tunisia and Egypt and help promoting the consolidation of the electoral identity of the region. Every single event that we have been able to support, where we encouraged this kind of discussions, networking, experience and knowledge sharing has been very fruitful to everybody.

And I would like to repeat the words of my colleague, Mansour from the UN Headquarters that what is happening here in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia in terms of elections is being very carefully looked at because it is really an example and a building block for all the work that we do in electoral assistance in the UN throughout the world. So you know, this part of the world has been at the centre of the world's attention for many months and it will continue to be so. And that is another reason for which I would like to thank all of you for being here, putting so much passion, interest and commitment to the discussions and for making our work so rewarding and so motivating.

So, all I can say in closing this Forum is that the promotion of networking between these three neighbouring countries continues to be a priority of our work in Electoral Assistance, and a priority of our work in the UN, particularly where putting women's role and participation in electoral and public life is concerned.

In the name of the UN family and in everybody's name, including myself, thank you very much for being here and for all your work.  
Shukran Gazilan."

## **4. Forum Outputs**

### **4.1 Lessons Learned from presentations, case studies and discussions:**

The participants unanimously agreed that the presence of women in decision-making positions is vital for changing the current status of women and society at large, therefore highlighted the following:

The inclusion in the constitution of articles that stipulate gender equality and the rights of women to exercise those rights facilitates women's participation in public and political life. Legislations that clearly call for and specify the fair representation of women in all electoral management bodies (e.g. by establishing a gender unit), in political parties, observing a quota system, and/or a parity system - vertical and horizontal), and their position on party representation lists, will ensure that women are adequately represented in these bodies. Promoting women's participation in the elections requires the support of men. Political parties or entities should set the tone for public discourse about the inclusion of women in political life by positioning them as leaders and active members of the parties and as spokespersons on a variety of issues.



Education, culture and media have a crucial role to play in sensitizing communities to the important role that women can play in the development of their societies. Cultural and conservative misconceptions and the prevailing patriarchal attitude that considers politics as a male only domain, which hinder women's political participation, should be addressed.

The same enabling factors such as access to resources and information as well as sufficient media coverage should be made available equally to both men and women. Formally acknowledge and support the role of civil society organizations through legislation in order to promote women's participation and consider grouping them into alliances or federations. Promote their efforts in supporting marginalized groups. Capacity building and mentoring should be provided to women candidates.

Capacity-building through hands-on/on the job training, like elections observation, training for lobbying, networking, public debating and getting messages across etc. can provide unique insights and experience on electoral management.

Updated accurate gender and geographically disaggregated data are vital planning tools. Research, identification and analyses of the impediments and challenges facing women, as well as the enabling factors are equally important in promoting women's participation.

Awareness and advocacy material adequately tailored to the educational and cultural level of the target groups will have more chance of success, particularly if presented in an attractive format (songs, colourful posters, cartoons, etc.).

Logistical considerations preventing some segments of society from participating in voting or in campaigning should be addressed, e.g. taking into consideration the number of constituencies, their location and the timing and duration of voting to encourage women's participation. Provide opportunities for local, regional and international sharing of experiences and networking.

## **4.2 Recommendations**

Having discussed women's status, needs and aspirations in the three countries, Egypt, Libya and Tunisia, reviewing and analyzing their comparative experiences in regard to electoral arrangements for enhancing women's participation as voters and candidates; as well as the challenges which affect women's abilities to be active participants in the development of their societies; and shedding light on the importance of the role of CSOs in raising awareness, educating voters and observing the electoral processes; the Forum participants unanimously agreed on the following:

- The need to reconsider laws and regulations related to women's political participation, to reflect on the effectiveness of the electoral systems in the three countries and to explore other measures to avoid the shortcomings observed during the present elections to guarantee a more meaningful representation of women in parliament;
- The need to enhance the gender perspective in the electoral preparation and to commit to women's political participation;
- The need to work with political parties/entities to strengthen within their own structures the role of women;
- The need to establish national mechanisms for promoting gender equality through democratization and election related activities;

- The need to put more emphasis on networking and creating alliances that rally large numbers of women around issues of relevance on the national, regional and international levels;
- The need to enhance the capacity of the civil society organizations to effectively deliver voter education and raise awareness regarding women's effective democratic engagement, conduct research studies to identify and assess the obstacles and challenges facing women, and to engage and mobilize women voters including marginalized women to help them overcome impediments to participation;
- The need to abide by the international conventions and agreements related to women, to which each country is party, to end gender- based discrimination.

#### **4.3 Conclusion:**

The participants unanimously agreed that the Forum provided an excellent opportunity for sharing practical experiences, following the first parliamentary elections after the Revolutions in the three countries, and assessing the gains and obstacles to be able to look forward to the future. Therefore this Forum should not be regarded as an end in itself, but one in a series of events, so that each of the three countries would be able to develop long-term strategies to encourage and increase the political participation of women, with the support of the international organizations and the United Nations.

# Pictorial Documentation



A selection of photos taken during the Forum, representing a general view of it's proceedings.























# Annexes

<b>Annex 1 : Forum Agenda .....</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>Annex 2 : Introductory Speeches .....</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Country Presentations .....</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Closing Statements .....</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>Annex 3 : Concept Note &amp; Background Papers             on Key issues .....</b>	<b>97</b>
<b>Annex 4 : Case Studies .....</b>	<b>133</b>
<b>Annex 5 : .....</b>	<b>163</b>
• <b>Documents</b>	
• <b>Other Documents</b>	
<b>About the Speakers .....</b>	<b>189</b>
<b>List of Participants .....</b>	<b>202</b>



## **FORUM AGENDA**

The Sub-Regional Forum on Women's Participation in Post-Revolutionary Parliamentary  
Elections: Comparative Experiences for Egypt, Libya and Tunisia  
Fairmont Heliopolis Hotel, Cairo: 9-10 December 2012  
Pearl Rooms 2 & 3





## Day 1 : 9 December 2012

8.30-9.30      **Registration of Participants**

9.30-10.00    **Opening Session**

Opening remarks

**Ambassador Omar Abou Eish**, Assistant Minister for International Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Egypt

**Mr. Geoffrey Prewitt**, Deputy Head, UNDP Regional Centre Cairo, Regional Bureau for the Arab States

**Dr. Sameera Al Tuwaijri**, Regional Director UN Women, Arab States Regional Office

**Presentation on “Participation and Objectives of the Forum at this Particular Point in Time”**

**Dr. Carlos Valenzuela**, Chief Electoral Adviser, UNDP Electoral Support in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia

10.00-10.45    **Introduction**

**Introductory Presentations by Egypt, Libya and Tunisia**

- **Egypt:** **Ambassador Mervat Tallawy**,  
President of the National Council For Women
- **Libya:** **Ms. Wafa Taher Bugaighis**,  
Chairman of the Committee  
to Support Women’s Participation in Decision Making
- **Tunisia:** **Ms. Kalthoum Badreddine**,  
Head of Legislative Committee,  
National Constituent Assembly

10.45-11.00    **Break**

11.00-12.10 **Session I :**

***Special Measures to Enhance Women's Representation:  
Regional and International Perspectives***

***Key issues:***

- How can special measures within the electoral system enhance women's representation? Quotas, reserved seats, parity law, zebra list, other measures
- Transitional special measures – focus on Egypt, Libya and Tunisia and additional case-study

***1) Presentation on "Special Measures to Enhance Women's Substantive Representation"***

by **Dr. Ali Abdul Jabbar**, UNDP Electoral Project, Egypt

***2) FloorDiscussion*** moderated by :

**Hon. Fatima Al Abassi**, General National Congress, Libya

***3) Case Study on Special Measures in Nepal*** presented by:

**Mr. Neel Uprety** , former acting Chairman the Electoral Commission of Nepal

***4) Q&A*** moderated by:

**Hon. Fatima Al Abassi**, General National Congress, Libya

12.10-13.10 **Break**

13.10-14.20 **Session II :**

***Women's Participation as Candidates:  
Regional and International Perspectives***

***Key issues :***

- Challenges for women candidates in the region
- The role of political parties in candidate selection - internal voting mechanisms in political parties
- Role of political financing
- Role of the media in campaigns
- Role of civil society, specifically women NGOs and international Organisations, in supporting women candidates

1) **Presentation on “Experience of Women’s Candidates in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia”** by:

**Soulef Guessoum**, Parliamentary Specialist, UNDP Electoral Support Project Tunisia

2) **Floor Discussion** moderated by :

**Dr. Ali Abdul Jabar**, UNDP Electoral Project, Egypt

3) **Case Study** on Women Candidates presented by:

**Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne**, Politician

4) **Q&A** moderated by:

**Dr. Ali Abdul Jabar**, UNDP Electoral Project, Egypt

14.20-14.35 **Coffee Break**

14.35-15.45 **Session III:**

### ***Women’s Participation as Voters: Challenges and Opportunities***

#### ***Key issues :***

- ☐ Enhanced participation of women voters: where and why?
- ☐ Role of voter outreach/education
- ☐ Role of the electoral administration and other support – outreach to women voters, registration/ID campaigns, polling arrangements

1) **Presentation** on “Women’s Participation as Voters” by :

**Ms. Shahrazad Maghrabi**, President, Libyan Women’s Forum

2) **Floor Discussion** moderated by :

**Dr. Hoda Badran**, Egyptian Feminist Union

3) **Case study** on Yemen presented by :

**Ms. Ilham Abdul Wahab**, DG, Women’s Section at Yemen Electoral Commission

4) **Q&A** moderated by :

**Dr. Hoda Badran**, Egyptian Feminist Union

## Day 2 : 10 December 2012

### 9.00-10.10 Session IV:

#### *Gender Sensitivity in Electoral Administration*

##### *Key issues :*

- ☐ International good practices – gender policies, how to ensure gender balance in selection of members of the EMB
- ☐ Egypt, Libya and Tunisia experiences
- ☐ Other regional and international experiences

1) *Presentation on “Gender Sensitivity in Electoral Administration: Egypt, Libya and Tunisia (2011/2012)”* by :

**Mr. Omar Boubakri**, Legal Adviser, UNDP electoral support project  
Tunisia

2) *Floor Discussion* moderated by :

**Judge Hesham Mokhtar**, Senior Member of Secretariat, High Judicial Electoral Commission, Egypt

3) *Case study* on South Africa presented by :

**Ms. Thoko Mpumlwana**, Former Deputy Chairperson of Electoral Commission of South Africa and Current Deputy Chairperson of the Commission for Gender Equality

4) *Q&A* moderated by :

**Judge Hesham Mokhtar**, Senior Member of Secretariat, High Judicial Electoral Commission, Egypt

### 10.10-11.20 Session V :

#### *Role of Civil Society in Promoting Women's Participation*

##### *Key issues :*

- ☐ Role of women Organisations in supporting the electoral process (civic education and awareness, electoral observation)
- ☐ Egypt, Libya and Tunisia experiences
- ☐ Other regional and international experiences

1) **Presentation on “Women’s Organisation Engagement in Support of the Electoral Process in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia”** by :

**Dr. Maya Morsy**, Country Coordinator UN Women, Egypt

2) **Floor Discussion** moderated by :

**Dr. Inas Abouyoussef**, Associate Professor in Journalism Department, Faculty of Mass Communication, Cairo University

3) **Case Study** on Sierra Leone presented by :

**Dr. Nemata Majeks-Walker**, Founder and First President, The 50/50 Group

4) **Q&A** moderated by :

**Dr. Inas Abouyoussef**, Associate Professor in Journalism Department, Faculty of Mass Communication, Cairo University

11.20-11.40 **Break**

11.40-13.00 **Roundtable Discussions - Formulation by Country: Key Lessons-Learned and the Way Forward**

Participants split into 3 working groups:

- **Egypt** facilitated by **Dr. Ali El Sawi**, President of the Parliamentary Programme in Cairo University
- **Libya** facilitated by **Dr. Rida Al Tuluby**, President, Ma’an Nabni – “Together We Build” Organisation
- **Tunisia** facilitated by **Mr. Said Khezami**, Chief Editor of Tunisian National Television

13.00-14.00 **Break**

14.00-14.30 **Presentations on “Lessons Learned and the Way Forward”**

- **Egypt** presentation by **Dr. Ali El Sawi**, President of the Parliamentary Programme in Cairo University
- **Libya** presentation by **Dr. Rida Al Tuluby**, President, Ma’an Nabni : “Together We Build” Organisation
- **Tunisia** presentation by **Ms. Imen Houimel**, General Director of Women

and Family Affairs, Ministry of Women and Family Affairs

14.30-14.40     **UN Electoral Assistance Division Intervention**  
***“Some thoughts on increasing women’s participation”***

***Mr. Mansour Sadeghi,***

Gender Focal Point, EAD Gender Focal Point, UN, New York

14.40-15.00     **Thanks and Closing Remarks**

***Mr. Carlos Valenzuela***

Chief Technical Advisor UNDP Electoral Support in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia







# Introductory Speeches, Country Presentations & Closing Statements

## Introductory Speeches: ..... 65

### ***Ambassador Omar Abou Eish***

Assistant Minister for International Cooperation  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Egypt

### ***Mr. Geoffrey Prewitt***

Deputy Head, UNDP Regional Centre Cairo  
Regional Bureau for the Arab States

### ***Dr. Sameera Al Tuwaijri***

Regional Director UN Women  
Arab States Regional Office

### ***Dr. Carlos Valenzuela***

Chief Electoral Adviser  
UNDP Electoral Support in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia

## Country Presentations: ..... 75

### **Egypt: *Ambassador Mervat Tallawy***

President, National Council for Women-Egypt

### **Libya: *Ms. Wafaa Bugaighis***

Chairman of the Committee to Support  
Women's Participation in Decision Making-Libya.

### **Tunisia: *Ms. Kalthum Baddreddine***

Chair, Committee on General Legislation  
National Founding Council-Tunisia

## Closing Statements: ..... 91

### ***Mr. Mansour Sadeghi***

EAD Gender Focal Point, UN, New York

### ***Mr. Carlos Valenzuela***

Chief Electoral Advisor UNDP Electoral Support in Egypt,  
Libya and Tunisia



## Annex 2.1 Introductory Speeches:

### *Ambassador Omar Abou Eish*

Assistant Minister for International Cooperation  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Egypt

## Women's Participation in Post-Revolution Parliamentary Elections

Cairo, 9 December 2012

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to address you all today at the opening of this very important Sub-Regional Forum on Women's Participation in Post-Revolutionary Parliamentary Elections which will compare the experiences of Egypt, Libya and Tunisia.

It is a pleasure to see such participation from international organizations, government agencies, civil society organizations and all the distinguished guests, representatives of the different countries. It indicates to me the strong interest in the subject of gender equality.

This is a fundamental value for all democratic societies that are committed to, and work towards the respect of Human rights. One central theme for the achievement of Gender Equality is the promotion of women's rights and women's political empowerment.

However, gender equality is also an area in which all of the countries in our Region are facing similar challenges. During these past two years, Libya, Tunisia and Egypt have undergone profound governance transformations towards the achievement of democracy. An inclusive participation of all the actors of the society is necessary, in order to implement the demands of the Revolutions. The high engagement of women in the Revolutions is an expression of their wishes for political participation. For the first time in many years women voted massively making their voice heard. The remarkable voter turnout of women in the elections indicates the willingness of women to participate proactively and engage with the democratic process, making the elections the 'first real democratic elections' in Egypt. However, their representation in the parliament and Constitutional Committee was minimal during all the stages of the transition.

The women's representation in the parliament did not exceed two percent due to the abolishment of the quota law, the positioning of the majority of women candidates in the tail of the party lists, and the mainstream patriarchal culture that doesn't encourage women in leadership positions. Thus, women can be regarded as excluded and completely marginalized from the country's legislative and decision-making bodies.

As you all know, Egypt's transition has been very unstable. However, the government is trying to make it as smooth as possible. Women political participation is still one of the areas that need more attention from all stakeholders. The Government of Egypt has exerted some efforts to encourage women political empowerment that was reflected in the electoral law which stipulated that at least one woman should be included on party lists on proportional seats and the re-launching of the National Council for Women.

Egypt has signed and ratified several major international and regional human rights declarations as well as women's instruments and treaties concerning the right to life, equality, freedom, and equal protection under the law. The conventions that Egypt ratified also refer to social conditions of women such as the right to equal education, to equal living conditions, health, freedom of movement, inheritance and nationality. Egypt recognized also the political rights of women such as the right to vote, run for elections, and exercise public functions. The ratification of the ILO Conventions also established the principles of equal remuneration and treatment, employment opportunities, access to markets and suitable and secure working conditions. Egypt has signed the UN Charter which recognizes women's equality in economic, social, cultural, political and civil rights as for men. Other important conventions related to women are the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR); the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR); and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). The Articles in these documents apply equally to men and women. In becoming party to a treaty, Egypt undertook a binding legal obligation, meaning that it should ensure conformity of national law with treaty provisions. Egypt also agreed to be bound to the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR) by becoming a member of the United Nations. In 1981 Egypt ratified the CEDAW convention. And in 2000 the country became a signatory of the Millennium Development Goals, under which gender equality and women's empowerment were reaffirmed both as development goals in themselves (MDG3) and as means to achieve all the other MDGs.

Despite the positive development regarding the legislative status of women and the fight regarding violence against women, Egyptian women should expect better success in terms of women's political representation. It is clear that the establishment of gender equality is a challenging process that requires social transformation. Political will is the main precondition for the success of gender equality, which is a key component of effective, equal and inclusive good democratic governance.

*Ladies and Gentlemen:*

This Regional Forum is intended as a platform for exchange of views on gender equality in the post-revolutionary parliamentary elections. It is an opportunity to identify the issues related to women's representation in the decision making. It is also, the occasion to explore ideas and learn from different experiences in order to bring an international perspective. All these similarities and differences can be shared in regional events on electoral issues which will increase understanding and give electoral administration officials the opportunity to network with other election administrators, academics, civil society organizations representatives and experts working in the field of elections.

In conclusion, please accept my sincere appreciation for your participation in this Forum regarding women's political empowerment. I hope that our joint efforts will advance gender equality in Tunisia, Libya and Egypt. And that this Forum will enrich the future elections in the three countries and the region.

I would like to thank all the distinguished members of UNDP and UN Women for hosting this event.

Thank you all.

## Annex 2.2 Introductory Speeches:

### *Mr. Geoffrey Prewitt*

Deputy Head, UNDP Regional Centre Cairo, Regional Bureau for the Arab States.

Shukran , Sabah El Kheir,  
Distinguished guests, participants

On behalf of the Regional Bureau for the Arab States, it is our pleasure to welcome you to the Sub-Regional Forum on Women's Participation in Post-revolution Parliamentary Elections: Comparative Experiences – Egypt, Libya and Tunisia.

Allow me to take a brief moment to thank our partner agencies, UN Women, Ms. Maya Morsy, as well as our very gracious host, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Abou Eish, and also to express my gratitude to the entire team of the Electoral Support Initiative. I think some of them at the table here, Carlos, Isabella, Annetta, etc. and the entire team of the Electoral Support project, who substantially and logistically hosted this event.

We are particularly pleased with the diverse delegations from Egypt, Libya and Tunisia.

We know that the events of early 2011 were a break with the past offering a promise of renewed societies built on justice and freedom. At the same time, they offered a new opportunity for citizens from across the region to bring fundamental changes to their role in public life. The part played by women as agents of change has been widely acknowledged. Many women, including women in this room, found themselves on the streets and demanding a better future for their families, for their children for their countries.

When the time came for political settlement, they said no to recreating the status quo, insisting instead that their voices were equally important in constructing a truly free Egypt, Libya and a free Tunisia. Their active participation in subsequent elections was a sign that women remained intent on exercising their rights, whether as candidates formulating visions for their countries, members of political parties mobilizing supporters, civil society members raising awareness or voters casting a ballot. Simply said, women have really been the backbone of much of this transition.

Yet some challenges remain. This Forum is about continuing that struggle and seeking new opportunities. In doing so, we have much to learn from each other. All three countries, Egypt, Libya and Tunisia, have recently concluded their first parliamentary elections since the fall of the previous regimes. Each of the three countries is currently undertaking new constitutional drafting processes and debates on the electoral systems and their respective institutions.

It is therefore an excellent moment to sit together, look back and consider what has been accomplished and consider what we can all accomplish in the future.

UNDP's Regional Centre in Cairo is here to support just such initiatives. Our role is to help you advocate for your development priorities as you see them. As part of these efforts we provide platforms for sharing experience and knowledge, including supporting such events as this.

In conclusion, the discussions scheduled over the next two days are about things that, at first

glance, particularly for someone who does not have expertise, like myself, in this specific area, sound rather technical: laws, and rules and procedures and systems and capacity in management. Fundamentally though, these topics are about what kind of society we want to build and what kind of future we want and how can we work together to get there.

I, for myself, want one based on equality.

Thank you.



## Annex 2.3 Introductory Speeches:

### *Dr. Sameera Al-Tuwaijri*

Regional Director, Arab States Regional Office, UN Women

## Women's Participation in Post- Revolutionary Parliamentary Elections

*Delivered on her behalf by :*

### *Dr. Maya Morsy*

UN Women Egypt Country Coordinator

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to welcome you all to this important Forum that fosters shared learning on the topic of women's participation, in the first post-revolutionary parliamentary elections in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia. Over the past two years, much has been said about the status of women's participation and representation in the transition to the new democracies that the citizens of the Arab world, men and women, young and old, have aspired to.

Until today, the women of the Arab world continue to demand their unrealized or partially fulfilled rights through all possible means. Women are present in public streets, traditional media, and have utilized social media platforms to convey their messages, not only to people in their country, but also to their neighbours and counterparts across the world. They insist to be here...

In spite of their strong presence and active participation as voters, candidates, supporters, among other roles that women play during elections, their participation could still be described as limited. Similar to the limiting factors, the enabling factors need yet to be further addressed and improved. In parliamentary elections following a party list system, for example, women seldom came on top of the party's list, besides other challenges that women face as individual or independent candidates. The challenges maybe attributed to the design of the electoral systems, institutions, or to the system at large, all of which do not lead women to exercise their full rights as citizens, and these are the issues that we are here to reflect on today. Stemming from the recognized challenges that women have previously faced in similar situations over time, UN Women has developed Standard Operating Principles for Women's Participation in Democratic Transitions that:

- ✓ Ensure free and fair elections for women
- ✓ Encourage political parties to address gender equality
- ✓ Support women's civil society organizations to advance women's interests
- ✓ Build accountability for women's rights in public institutions
- ✓ Enhance policy making and oversight capacity of women in public office
- ✓ Promote gender justice

UN Women exists for only one reason—to deliver results that advance gender equality and

improve the lives of women. It supports countries to enhance legal frameworks and national capacities to build stronger institutional accountability for gender equality. UN Women recognizes that effective results will only be achieved through stronger partnerships, coordination, and sharing of information, knowledge, best practices and lessons learned.

In March 2012 the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 66/130, which calls upon all States to eliminate laws, regulations and practices that, in a discriminatory manner, prevent or restrict women's participation in the political process; also calls upon all States to enhance the political participation of women, to accelerate the achievement of equality between men and women and, in all situations, including in situations of political transition, to promote and protect the human rights of women with respect to:

- (a) Engaging in political activities;
- (b) Taking part in the conduct of public affairs;
- (c) Associating freely;
- (d) Assembling peacefully;
- (e) Expressing their opinions and seeking, receiving and imparting information and ideas freely;
- (f) Voting in elections and public referendums and being eligible for election to publicly elected bodies on equal terms with men;
- (g) Participating in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof, holding public office and performing public functions at all levels of government;

The Resolution calls upon States in situations of political transition to take effective steps to ensure the participation of women on equal terms with men in all phases of political reform, from decisions on whether to call for reforms in existing institutions to decisions regarding transitional governments, to the formulation of government policy, to the means of electing new democratic governments.

It also urges all States:

- To review the differential impact of their electoral systems on the political participation of women and their representation in elected bodies and to adjust or reform those systems where appropriate;
- To take all appropriate measures to eliminate prejudices based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority
- To strongly encourage political parties to remove all barriers that directly or indirectly discriminate against the participation of women,
- To promote awareness and recognition of the importance of women's political participation,
- To develop mechanisms and training to encourage women to participate in the electoral process,
- To implement appropriate measures within governmental bodies and public sector institutions to eliminate direct or indirect barriers to and enhance women's participation in all levels of political decision-making;

- To accelerate the implementation of strategies, and promote gender balance in political decision-making, take all appropriate measures to encourage political parties to ensure that women have a fair and equal opportunity to compete for all elective public positions;
- To improve and broaden women's access to information and communications technologies,
- To investigate allegations of violence, assault or harassment of women elected officials and candidates for political office, create an environment of zero tolerance for such offences and, to ensure accountability, take all appropriate steps to prosecute those responsible;
- To encourage greater involvement of women who may be marginalized, women with disabilities, women from rural areas and women of any ethnic, cultural or religious minority, in decision-making at all levels,
- To encourage the promotion of programmes geared towards the sensitization and orientation of youth and children,
- To ensure that measures to reconcile family and professional life apply equally to women and men,
- To promote the granting of appropriate maternity and paternity leave in order to facilitate women's political participation;
- To take proactive measures to address factors preventing or hindering women from participating in politics, such as violence, poverty, lack of access to quality education and health care, and gender stereotypes;
- To monitor and evaluate progress in the representation of women in decision-making positions;
- Also encourages States to appoint women to posts within all levels of their Governments, including, where applicable, bodies responsible for designing constitutional, electoral, political or institutional reforms;
- Further encourages States to commit themselves to establishing the goal of gender balance in governmental bodies and committees, as well as in public administrative entities, and in the judiciary,
- Encourages States and relevant civil society organizations to support programmes that facilitate women's participation in political and leadership activities
- Invites States to exchange experience and best practices on women's political participation in all phases of the political process, including in times of political change and reform;
- Encourages Governments to provide precise data on the political participation of women at all levels, including, where appropriate, information on the political participation of women in times of political transition.

With that being said, if we are to sum up the years of work experience of every person in this room, we will have exceeded more than one hundred (100) years of experience in supporting citizens on the ground. This is what makes this crowd a very unique one and I am sure that during these two (2) days we will have all very much benefitted from this vast expertise.

Please allow me to conclude by thanking all the guest speakers who came all the way to share with us their invaluable experience on the different topics we will be discussing, the delegations from Libya, Tunisia, and Egypt, and last but not least, the organizers who made this conference happen. I wish you all the best of luck.

Thank you

## Annex 2.4 Introductory Speeches:

### *Dr. Carlos Valenzuela*

Chief Electoral Adviser

UNDP Electoral Support in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia

Good morning to all and good morning to our very distinguished Panel.

For me it is an object of great happiness actually to have you all here. I have had the privilege of working in the three wonderful countries: Egypt, Tunisia and Libya and it is a pleasure to see so many faces here together that I have seen in different parts of the world.

I want to also acknowledge the work of our team in Egypt to organize this event - a lot of work that took place; but also the work of our teams in Tunisia and Libya to make this possible.

I will be very brief because I think the importance of this event should be obvious to everybody – all of you that are here. I just wanted to reiterate the fact that has been mentioned already and that the participation of women in the political transitions that are experienced in the three countries is hugely important, and that while elections are not the all of the political transition, they are really a very important element of the transition, and the role of women is absolutely essential so that elections can have the credibility that they require.

This is not an academic event. We are not talking here about issues that are theoretical. This is really a lessons-learned exercise, looking at what happened in the first parliamentary elections after the Revolutions in the three countries, to share experiences, to see what was gained and to see what were the obstacles and be able to look forward because there are new elections, constitutions to be written, laws to be made, so we all hope that these will be very productive sessions for all of you.

Again thank you.



## Annex 2.5 Country Presentations:

Translation from Arabic

### Egypt: *Ambassador Mervat Tallawy*

President, National Council for Women-Egypt

*Ladies and Gentlemen*

*Distinguished Guests,*

I would like first to thank both UNDP and UN Women for the initiative of organizing this Forum now. This Forum comes at a momentous time as it may be the first of its kind as it deals with the political participation of women in elections in the sense that it addresses important issues such as electoral systems and processes, running as candidates for elections, constituencies and the legal aspect of the political participation.

It will therefore be extremely important to review and study all the documents, presentations and experiences discussed during the Forum relating to the elections processes in the three countries of the Arab Spring and review the situation before the Revolution and analyse the changes that occurred following them to benefit from the different experiences in order to redress the situation regarding women's political participation.

In particular, the focus should be on:

- The constitutions and the articles they should include to support and enable women's , proper and adequate participation in political life.
- The electoral law and the necessity for the inclusion and position of women on election party lists.
- Reviewing the electoral constituencies, their numbers, capacity, their location and size in order to determine what factors may hinder or encourage women to run for elections and help them to win.

If the purpose is to achieve democracy and provide opportunities for all, many of the electoral regulations, procedures and methods need to be revisited, particularly in communities where either high illiteracy rates prevail, or on the contrary in communities that have a more advanced social culture, as these regulations need to be adapted and well regulated in advance.

The legislator needs to take into consideration the social conditions of the various segments of the society in order to address the existing soft spots. A gender perspective should be mainstreamed in the drafting of legislations; and national budgets should be gender sensitive, taking into account the needs of women.

Furthermore, the contribution of civil society organizations and particularly those NGOs working for the empowerment of women and involved in their capacity building and training to run for elections need to be supported.

The role of political parties as main partners in the electoral process requires careful review and changing the mind set of political party leaders, in order to convince them that securing the maximum number of parliamentary seats should not be at the detriment of women.



*Ladies and Gentlemen*

Egyptian women participated in the 25 January 2011 Revolution, as they did in the 1919 Revolution, fearless of death and injury, to defend the interest of their homeland, demanding its freedom and democracy; and for nearly a century they participated in every effort taken to achieve these goals and not just to demand their human rights.

Yet, the post-revolution transitional period witnessed a regression of the role of women and attempts to exclude her from high level positions. Only two women are ministers in the new Cabinet, only 11 women are members of the parliament and only 7 women are members of the Constituent Assembly. Women were excluded from participating in the political debates, such as the Committee to review a number of constitutional articles.

The last draft of the constitution did not address the equality between men and women in political, economic, social and cultural rights. Article 10 which relates to women stipulates support for women only in their roles as mothers, during pregnancy and for women heads of households. The draft constitution does not guarantee the freedom of movement of women, nor does it protect them from violence, nor does it protect the violation of personal freedoms in general.

The Electoral Law did not provide a quota for women nor required the parties to allocate a quota for them. It only stipulated the inclusion of at least one woman on each party list, without specifying her position on the list. Furthermore, the sizes of the constituencies are generally neither suitable for women nor for independent candidates (majoritarian).

During the transitional period, the Army assumed the protection of the Revolution and Egypt, to avoid conflict between the Army and the people. However, several mistakes were made in their administration of this period, the first being not approving of starting the democratic process by drafting the constitution; then by carrying out the referendum on the constitutional amendments of 17 March, which were subsequently amended. In that draft constitution, other mistakes were found, such as approving the establishment of political parties with religious affiliations and not penalizing the infringements of the electoral law related to the composition of the Constituent Assembly.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

During the transitional period, the National Council for Women (NCW), the national women machinery for the empowerment of women, was restructured in February 2012.

The 27 branches of NCW in the governorates were energized and restructured. The Equal Opportunity Units (EOUs) in the ministries were reinstated.

The implementation of the National Socioeconomic Development Plan was reviewed; and the needs of women in the provinces and at the local level were reassessed in order to be incorporated in the new cycle of the National Socioeconomic Development Plan (2012-2017).

In order to address the opposition that women are facing during the transitional period, with

the rise of the conservative religious trends that are trying to revoke some of the gains pertaining to their human rights, which women achieved after long years of struggle, NCW sought the support of Al Azhar Al Sharif, the supreme authority on the Islamic Sharia to officially confirm, through an official document, that the laws being challenged comply with the Sharia. Furthermore, NCW exerted strong efforts to halt the attempts of the parliament to change the personal status laws, and those pertaining to child custody and the age of marriage. In addition, conferences condemning violence against women were organized in the 27 governorates of Egypt.

The major challenge that not only women face, but Egypt as a whole, is the new draft constitution. NCW, representing almost half the population, had previously expressed its rejection of the biased representation of women in the first and second Founding Committee for Drafting the Constitution, and disagreements took place among the Constituent Assembly members about the rights and duties of women in the country's new constitution. Prompted by its national responsibility the NCW subsequently organized a campaign calling for the rejection of the draft constitution urging and leading the civil society to unite for entrenching the rights of citizenship, the rule of law, equality in rights, freedoms, and public duties, equal opportunities among all citizens and providing a just opportunity for women's appointments in all decision-making positions, for example, vice-president or prime minister.

The electoral laws and systems must call for and urge parties to allocate a special quota for women and a top position on their election lists. Such measures have worked well in several countries. Laws should also take into consideration all procedures and legislations related to elections, including the system for dividing electoral constituencies, the important role of the civil society in support of women's political participation, which should be embodied in a legal framework. This will enable CSOs to better perform their role in this regard.

This event is probably the first of its kind after the Revolutions, as it will provide important documentation and actual experiences on the various aspects and elements of women's political participation in this transitional period. It is crucial to study the technical details of the political processes and why women are not a priority. Experiences have to be analysed to find out how societies' views on women in politics can be changed. Women's rights are not a gift, rather a necessity and a social issue that concerns all of us.



## Annex 2.6 Country Presentations:

Translation from Arabic

**Libya: *Ms. Wafa Taher Bugaighais***

Head of Legislative Committee

National Constituent Assembly - Libya

### Women's Participation in Post Revolutionary Parliamentary Elections Comparative Experiences for Egypt, Libya and Tunisia Cairo 9-10 December 2012

A word of thanks to UNDP and UN Women Expression of happiness for being in beloved Egypt may God protect her and her people.

Equality between the sexes in political participation is a basic aspect of contemporary governance. Most international conventions and social studies acknowledge the necessity for enabling both women and men to enjoy equal rights and opportunities in complete participation in all aspects and on all levels of the political operation. But on the ground we find that women face many obstacles in exercising their rights, especially in Libya where most of its community still hold on to tradition and cultural inheritance based on conservative religious beliefs that go to extremes hindering the achievement of the social reforms necessary for the development of the country. The purpose of this presentation is to present the actual experience of Libyan women in political participation in the post-revolution stage. In addition, it is meant to shed light on the most important challenges that women face when trying to attain positions in decision making, to examine the role of the civil and the international community in supporting women's political participation and to identify the accredited mechanism to overcome these challenges.

#### **Elections Law and Electing the National Constituent Assembly**

The 7th of July 2012 witnessed the first ever elections in the new Libya, to elect the members of the National Constituent Assembly which replaces the interim National Council which was discharged as the legislative body. The High Commission for Elections indicated that of the eligible voters only 80% were registered and 45% of them were women.

The first draft of the Election Law allocated 10% of the 200 seats of the National Constituent Assembly to be elected by the majoritarian system to women. But the draft and the quota met with arguments which led to adopting the final text of the Law which was approved by the Interim Council near the end of February 2012. The Elections Law that was finally adopted was based on three types of election systems; of the 200 seats allocated to the National Congress members, 80 were allocated to the proportional lists on the condition that 50/50 vertical and horizontal alternation were applied instead of the quota. The remaining 120 seats were for the independent candidates and the one nontransferable vote system was applied, which did not help to support more of the independent candidates according to the distribution of the constituencies. The quota on the independent lists was cancelled.

The number of women voters and women candidates confirms women's determination to participate in the elections; yet some consider that their numbers in total were modest. 634 women ran for elections. 549 of them ran on party lists on which there were 1206 candidates,

whereas 85 women dared to run independent from among 2501. In all, these figures emphasize the commitment and the great enthusiasm of the Libyans in all regions. Many Libyan Women defied the challenges that stood between them and participation in the political life, such as social traditions and economic conditions, and this was a promising portent of a new Libya in which the women will fight for their political rights. About this Mr. Martin, the U.N Envoy to Libya, said the new Libya has provided Libyan women the opportunity to declare their political, economic and social aspirations. What characterizes the Libyan experience is that for the first time in its modern history, women in Libya have been engaged in the elections experience, unlike her sisters in Tunisia and Egypt where women were engaged in the electoral experience though it was not above board. In fact, 33 women were elected to participate in the National Congress which has 200 members. This is considered to be a great achievement in the first ever elections in the new Libya. This women's representation is close to 16.5.% of the legislative authority. 32 of these women won through party lists which followed the vertical and the horizontal alternation method providing a successful model in support of women's success in the elections, whereas only one woman out of 85 candidates was able to win independently. This result poses a major challenge for the Libyan democracy in the coming period.

Thus, if we look at the percentage of women's participation , we can see that as a figures it can be considered a big achievement, yet the fact that one woman won as an independent candidate is the strongest evidence of the amount of challenges that Libyan women face in a close conservative society. It is obvious that allocating a quota would be the greatest support for women's fair participation in any political body.

#### **Among the most important tasks of the National Congress:**

Appointing a new government and appointing or electing the National Constituent Assembly to draft the constitution, the composition of which is still under debate. Among the actual challenges facing Libyan women is securing a foothold in a fair percentage in the National Constituent Assembly and this is still being addressed, in coordination with the various authorities. As for the government, a prime minister has been elected from among the National Congress members and he in turn selected his cabinet. Of 32 portfolios, women were given only 2 for tasks confined to the usual stereotypical roles, which met with protests from the CSO's concerned with women's political participation.

#### **The mechanisms adopted by the authorities to support women's political participation:**

We have to take into consideration that the situation in Libya after the Revolution is still unstable and witnesses ambiguous developments. It has become clear that the past consecutive governments have not adopted progressive programs that can encourage women's political participation and guarantee it in the long run; and this is evident in the absence of women's representation in the recently established governmental bodies. This is in spite of the fact that the transitional National Council issued immediately after the Revolution a constitutional declaration that stipulated that all Libyans are equal before the law as regards "civil political rights" and that it renounces all forms of discrimination on the basis of religion, sect, language, wealth, sex, genealogy, political orientation and social status" (Article 6 of the Declaration). It also stipulates that the Libyan State must protect human rights and ratify the international covenants and conventions that aim to support and protect human rights (Article 7). Yet, regrettably, all the extremely idealistic stands were nothing more than a reflection of the humani-

tarian feelings that befell the Libyans at the beginning of the Revolution.

No one can deny the numerous difficulties facing the National Congress now, which, some state, ought to be solved before the Congress starts to address the major social, political and economic reforms. Yet one can say now that the issues related to equal and fair representation between all and on all levels, including equality between the sexes, are basic principles, indispensable to any government that endeavours to implement democratic governance and involve all segments of the people in ruling. Participation in politics and in decision making cannot be regarded as just another problem, but rather as part of the solution, or in other words, a basic component in the path towards development that aims to resolve the problems that Libya is suffering from.

The recently elected General National Congress and the elected government should take serious measures to guarantee women's representation, in addition to allocating a set quota for women's representation, even if only temporarily, until equal opportunities are available. This is known as providing positive discrimination "quota" in all the state's structures. Yet until now no program or mechanism supporting a wider political participation of women on all levels, has been announced.

### **CSOs role in support of women's participation in decision making**

The CSOs that were established shortly after the Revolution played a major role in defending women's rights and supporting their participation in decision making. Some of them have diligently started early, and before the passing of the Elections Law, activities to advance civic culture and human rights, including women's rights. They also worked on explaining the complicated Elections Law through campaigns, seminars and disseminating leaflets and printing booklets. Naturally, the media was one of the tools used to support women's participation in the electoral process, whether as voters or candidates. Among the activities of the organizations, there were symposiums and training courses to help build the capacities and skills of the candidates in leadership and running election campaigns.

The civil society closely cooperated with the international organizations in an effort that extended throughout the Revolution and afterwards. This cooperation greatly contributed to building the capacity of the Civil Society, to supporting symposiums and training courses and issuing the publications appropriate for each phase and its civil and political needs, beginning with the humanitarian organizations at the outset of the Revolution, moving on to structuring administration and leadership, and finally the elections, transitional justice and the Constitution. Topmost of the international organizations are the United Nations, the UNDP and the National Democratic Institute.

Raising political awareness was left entirely to the civil society; and it would be fair to say that

the CSOs took over the responsibility and did their utmost in this short period, using their limited and modest capacities in the absence of financial support from the government for their activities. The elections of 7 July 2012 were historic and represented an achievement that bears witness to the efforts of the civil society.

The civil society also pushes for protecting the legislations concerning women on the basis of equality in citizenship rights, through calling for observing these principles in the constitution that will be drafted within a year, beginning with the foundation of the family law, protection from gender violence, and on to economic development, motivation, and finally guaranteeing a political voice.

It still remains to be said that it is obvious that the consecutive transitional governments refrain from implementing policies that are not popular, and that they will probably go along with the prevailing perceptions about the roles of the sexes; therefore, the local civil society must become a strong force pushing for change.

The national plan proposed for action is coordination and cooperation between various parties:

*Admitting* that the Libyan society witnesses great shortcomings on empowering women who, similar to men, lack leadership skills that can qualify them to occupy the positions they deserve during the transitional period;

*Recalling* the equality between the sexes provided for in Islam and by international covenants and conventions/treaties concerned with human rights issues, in a conference held in Tripoli late in October 2012 sponsored by UNDP and the National Democratic Institute on lessons learned;

We recommended that the following measures be taken within the framework of a national plan of action to be implemented by the National Congress, the elected government, the various political parties and the civil society. Following is a summary of these measures:

- Strict implementation of laws concerned with equality between the sexes and other related laws, in addition to the complete implementation of the plans of action that fulfill the state's commitments to the international covenants through the use of punishment or motivation to increase the chances of achieving this.
- Cooperation between the civil society, government officials, political parties, the media, religious communities and the business community to promote the integration of women.
- Establishing local, national and regional networks of women for women, such as security sector networks, trans-party women's associations, business associations that enable women to support other women and guide the future generation of leaders.
- Involving men on a wide scale as allies and partners.
- Formulating a comprehensive and sustainable strategy capable of achieving progress on the cultural, social and economic levels in domains related to women and empowering women to improve their perception of their rights and capabilities.
- The National Congress should reinstate its commitment to civil freedoms, and women's rights to participation in public life with no intimidations, harassment or discrimination.



This commitment should be confirmed through legislation and policies that unequivocally affirm its respect of civil freedom and human rights and undertake to establish a mechanism that implements these laws regardless of sex through;

- Insuring the security required for the advancement of women,
- The new government should take the necessary measures to ensure peace and security for all Libyans. To accomplish the required progress, reconciliation, transitional justice and confiscations of the widespread arms must be achieved.
- Establishing a quota system that guarantees women no less than 30% in all executive and decision making positions; in addition taking additional special measures to ensure women's participation in political life.
- Emphasizing the right to equality between men and women through highlighting the role of each in the society.
- Build women's capacity to enable them to assume leadership positions and work towards empowering them in all political, cultural, economic and educational fields, whether public or private on the local and international levels.
- Actively seek to change the prevailing mind sets through empowering women and supporting their presence in the media.
- Enact main legislations, amend the old ones and take the necessary measures that guarantee and protect women's rights, especially through ensuring their safety and constitutionalizing their rights.
- Develop women's economic roles by supporting their participation in economic activities, which would contribute to creating women leaders in the economy and stimulate honest economic competition in the market.
- Raise women's awareness of their rights through the media and the available communication networks.
- Work on forming women's lobbying groups to influence decision makers to prompt them to include women in public affairs.

### **The Constitution and Libyan Women's Expectations:**

There is no doubt that among the challenges facing Libyan women is securing a fair foothold in the National Constituent Committee. The Libyan citizens, both men and women expect the National Congress to appoint or "elect" the National Constituent Committee to prepare for and draft a constitution that reflects the claims, principles and the values for which the Revolution erupted, most important of which are the principles of freedom, dignity, justice and equality between men and women. To achieve this, and according to the polls and the workshop held in this respect, the consensus was that the Committee when drafting the Constitution should observe several issues including:

- Establishing a supreme council to be in charge of women's issues under the legislative authorities
- Unambiguous protection for the articles of the constitution
- Renouncing all forms of discrimination including discrimination against women
- Addressing women directly in all chapters by which the constitution recognizes rights and freedoms.
- The constitution must acknowledge that it is the duty of the state to take all the necessary

measures to eliminate the legal obstacles, especially social and economic, that hinder achieving equality in real life between men and women particularly those that obstruct women's chances of wading into public life.

- Women's rights and gains should not be just restricted to family law and the personal status law; they are also citizens who have civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights.
- Recognizing the international treaties to which Libya is party as among the basic documents/references that guarantee human rights in general and women's rights in particular.
- The state should endeavour to achieve equality between men and women and to this end should establish a council or authority concerned with combating all forms of discrimination against women, and with building women's capacities at present and in the future; and establishes a centre to monitor and evaluate women's status.
- No doubt, the structure of the state, the system for local government, the sources of legislation the principle of the separation of powers and respect for the rights of the minorities will be a top priority for all citizens.

It is worth mentioning here that the CSOs have succeeded in activating the Nationality Law which concerns granting the Libyans citizenship to children of Libyan women married to non Libyans which was issued like other laws issues in favour of women but were not implemented and remained on paper just as other laws.

## Annex 2.7 Country Presentations:

Translation from Arabic

### Tunisa: *Ms. Kalthum Baddreddine*

Chair, Committee on General Legislation  
National Constituent Assembly - Tunisia

## Women's Participation in the Post Revolution Parliamentary Elections

*In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful*

First, I would like to thank the organizers who put so much effort to organize this seminar, especially the UN Development Program (UNDP) and the UN Women.

Political participation is one of the most important principles of modern and civilized countries as it forms the essence of citizenship and its practical implementation. Political participation represents the foundation of democracy and a clear expression of state sovereignty. Elections are perceived as the most democratic means to express the will of the people that enables them to choose their rulers and their representatives in elected councils.

The principle of participation in political life in Tunisia was officially endorsed in the Constitution of 1959. Chapter VIII of this Constitution stipulated the right to form political parties and stressed that political parties play a role in organizing the political participation of citizens into structures. Chapter VI of the same Constitution also affirms that all citizens are equal before the law. Therefore, participation and contribution to public and political life has not been restricted to male citizens. On the contrary, there was no gender discrimination in this area.

Moreover, the Tunisian law acknowledged women's right to vote and run for elections since 1959. Tunisia is thus considered a pioneer in the adoption of this right for women, compared with other Arab countries and even some Western countries. Nevertheless, and despite these legal and constitutional texts, the presence of women and their participation in political life was neither evident nor outstanding, and their presence in the areas of decision-making and responsibility has been very limited, despite their outstanding presence in social voluntary work.

The inadequate political presence and participation of women is mainly due to the policy of restricting freedoms practiced by the former regime against Tunisians in general, both men and women. The majority of the laws relating to the formation and organization of political parties imposed limitations on political practice and narrowed the freedom to form parties based on intellectual or ideological affiliations. By virtue of the prevailing authoritarian regime that minimized freedoms, Tunisia witnessed many arrests among women political activists and the political scene experienced the restriction of the role of women human rights advocates.

The dominance of a single party led to the exclusion of opposition and to the absence of opposing ideologies in decision making, with the exception of individual oppositions loyal to the ruling party. This limited, to a large extent, the presence of women in official positions. Additionally, this "single party" policy as well as falsifying and forging the people's will in the elections- which were the most widely used mechanisms by the former regime to perpetuate

the authoritarian system- resulted in the lack of confidence of voters in the elections and naturally led to their reluctance to participate, whether as voters or as candidates, due to lack of transparency and fairness. Consequently, the outcome of the elections was often known in advance: a definite victory of the ruling party.

Women were victims of the authoritarian regime prevailing in Tunisia before the Revolution, which sought to improve its image nationally and internationally by granting women many opportunities for political participation through representation in parliament. However, their presence was a mere formality and a record to show off, mainly used to enhance the image of the autocratic system.

When the glorious Revolution of 14 January took place, the revolution for freedom and dignity and the entire Tunisian people (men and women) rose in revolt against tyranny and dictatorship, women came out to participate in the revolution and their significant presence contributed effectively to the success of the Revolution and the success of the transitional period.

Huge numbers of women participated in the mass demonstrations and marches: pupils, students, housewives, workers or employees. Their presence was both direct and also through urging their sons and husbands to get out and participate.

After the Revolution, the Tunisian people called for the election of a National Constituent Assembly after the suspension of the current Constitution and the disruption of the constitutional institutions and inevitably the authoritarian system that prevailed in the country. The role of the National Constituent Assembly was to enact a new Constitution for the country and build the Second Republic, based on democracy and freedom.

Women and civil society in Tunisia were constantly calling for equality between men and women and for sustaining the benefits acquired and secured by Tunisian women since their country gained independence. This was particularly expressed by some groups fearing the regression of women's rights due to the presence of an Islamist majority in parliament. However, the draft constitution which was prepared guaranteed the rights of women and strengthened their gains. The draft constitution, in its Preamble/Preface and General Principles sections, acknowledged the principle of equality between male and women citizens before the law. It also acknowledged, in the Rights and Freedoms Articles, the principle of equal citizenship between men and women, as well as the principle of opposing violence against women, opposing gender discrimination and endorsing equal opportunities in assuming responsibilities.

Previous election mechanisms relied on the power and dominance of the executive authority of the regime, represented by the Ministry of Interior. For the first time in the history of elections, an independent committee was directed to oversee the electoral process of the National Constituent Assembly elections as stipulated in Decree number 27 of 18/04/2011.

Women's participation in the administration of these elections was remarkable, despite its limitation, as only two women representatives were assigned as members of the central structures of the Election Commission. The presence of women was also reported in the local organization branches of the various states. Women also contributed to the management of the entire electoral process, whether through their presence inside the polling stations or as overseers or as part of the administrative workforce.

Women's participation as voters and candidates in the National Constituent Assembly elections which took place on 23 October 2011 was evident and prominent.

For the first time in the history of Tunisia since independence, Decree No. 35/2011 was issued governing the elections of the National Constituent Assembly. The legal framework of the Tunisian post revolution electoral process is characterized by acknowledging the principle of parity and vertical rotation regarding women's representation in electoral lists. The decree has been revolutionary in this respect, thereby intensifying the support of women's representation in parliament and consolidating her participation in political life.

Although political parties committed to the parity and vertical rotation between men and women in electoral lists, they were not obliged to adopt horizontal rotation, especially since the electoral law did not impose this type of parity.

The principle of parity adopted in the law governing the elections of 23 October 2011 supported the rise of women and their representation in the Council. This presence, however, remained limited due to the considerations mentioned earlier. Out of 217 members of the National Constituent Assembly, 59 were women, with a women/men ratio of 27 percent. The number increased to 63 women later, as some male members were appointed to government positions. They resigned and were replaced by the candidates who were next in the electoral lists of their respective parties. The women/men ratio thereby increased to 29 percent. (This number has later increased to 65 seats making it a 29.95% win.)

Women's participation in the National Constituent Assembly was remarkable as they proved to be reliable, responsible, and of outstanding performance. Their participation was not limited to attending meetings, but extended to the highest authority of the Board, as a woman took the responsibility of first deputy to the Chairman. Women were also strongly present in the office of Board of the National Constituent Assembly as 3 women became assistants to the Chairman in the areas of finance, legislation and media.

Women members of the Council were also assigned as heads of constituent committees for legislation and for special committees in addition to being represented as members of these committees. In general, women have showed excellent participation on both the levels of performance and management of their responsibilities within the National Constituent Assembly and proved to be worthy to assume such responsibilities.

In addition to their participation in the drafting of the Constitution within the constituent committees,, their work within legislative committees and contribution to other specialized committees, the most important achievement of women parliamentarians in Tunisia is their efforts in forming a coalition of women parliamentarians from within the National Constituent Assembly comprised of members from diverse political backgrounds, in a serious attempt to strengthen their presence, defend their gains and form a strong lobby within the Council for the purpose of defending all matters relating to women's rights. Serious efforts are currently taking place to prepare an internal system for this women parliamentary lobby, and legally organize it into a women Commission/Delegation within the Parliament.

It must be acknowledged that the principle of parity has helped tremendously in consolidating the presence of women. However, the absence of any law or procedure to impose equal opportunities between men and women in executive positions has rendered women's presence

in the government very weak. The post revolution government included only two women: Minister of Women Affairs, Minister of Environmental Affairs as well as a Secretary of State at the Ministry of Transportation.

We believe that this is mainly due to the male mentality prevailing in society, which is basically conservative towards the presence of women in positions of responsibility, authority or decision-making.

Although Tunisian women have occupied many important posts as judges, directors of institutions, university professors, etc., Yet their presence within the centres of decision-making remained limited. In order to overcome these shortcomings and to contribute to further strengthening the presence of women, consolidating their political participation and strengthening their presence in positions of authority and responsibility, further measures and legislations must be endorsed.

The Tunisian experience, as well as the experiences of the other Arab Spring countries, proved that the absence of laws imposing parity and the absence of any allocation ratio (quota) for women's representation in any election or in governmental or non-governmental agencies, will only lead to weak and modest participation.

Therefore, and in order to further strengthen the presence of women, enhance their political participation and to further consolidate their presence in decision-making positions, the adoption of legislation in favour of all that must be considered.

Currently, and as we are in the process of passing out a new law for the creation of a permanent independent supreme body for the elections, women parliamentarians within the Constituent Assembly of Tunisia are calling for imposing the adoption of parity in the composition of this body as well as for other serious proposals in this respect.

Similarly, there are important calls from within the National Constituent Assembly and from outside, by some political parties and civil society groups and women advocates to establish the principle of parity and not to relinquish this gain - which was brought by the Revolution - in the coming electoral legislation. This will help support the contribution of women in the future presidential, legislative/ parliamentary, and municipal/civil elections as both voters and candidates. It will also ensure their representation in the government and in all national, provincial, and local councils.

In this respect we must be aware of the specificity of the current phase experienced by our country and the transitional period which requires the intensification of our efforts to build a new, sound and balanced Republic where respect for human rights, fairness and equal opportunities between the sexes prevail, where the role of women and their importance as active partners in development, as half of the society and in building Tunisia's future is acknowledged

Here, I would like to point out the important role that the media can play in this respect by highlighting the importance of women's participation in political life and in the elections and in showing the effectiveness and talent of women, their success in the positions they attained and by showing the best examples/role models of successful women.

I would also like to emphasize the role played by civil society in making women aware of the



importance of their participation in the elections as candidates or voters, especially in rural areas, and to emphasize the importance of the electoral process in consolidating citizenship and in expressing the will of women to choose their representatives.

We cannot over-emphasize that international organizations should contribute to the promotion and strengthening of women candidates by supporting their campaigns and encourage them in the upcoming elections, which are only a few months away.

Finally, I would like to commend the organization of such seminars by the United Nations Programme, as these offer a great opportunity to exchange experiences and draw lessons on Tunisian, Egyptian and Libyan women's participation in the elections taking place following the Arab Spring Revolutions. They also create an opportunity to reflect on the most important problems and challenges that women face in order to support their political presence further, to propose practical measures to promote their participation in public and political life and to increase their presence in high offices and decision making posts.

Thank you.



## Annex 2.8 Closing Statements:

### *Mr. Mansour Sadeghi*

UN Electoral Assistance Division (EAD), Gender Focal Point, UN, New York

Please allow me to begin by extending our sincere thanks to our dear colleagues in UNDP and UN Women in Cairo, and to Dr. Carlos Valenzuela and his great teams in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya for organizing this very productive and successful Forum. I have been very honored and privileged to participate in this Forum on behalf of the Electoral Assistance Division, and learn from the excellent thoughts, lessons learned and experiences shared in the past two days. Apart from the fact that the conclusions of this Forum can help inform the next steps in the democratic processes in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya, they will also feed into our planning in the UN system for our future support to electoral process in the region and beyond.

Many points which I initially intended to refer to in my short presentation were eloquently raised by the distinguished speakers who spoke in the previous sessions, and therefore, in the interest of time I will suffice to mentioning the following few points:

Transition periods and emerging democratic situations offer an opportunity (maybe, in some cases, the best opportunity in the history of nations) to address inequalities of the past through the adoption and implementation of strategies and legal frameworks conducive to a greater role for women in politics. More than a third of the countries with 30 percent or more women MPs are those with transitional experience. If these opportunities are not effectively used to remove the historical injustices women have been facing, doing so in the future may prove to be more difficult.

By September 2012 women accounted for 20.5 percent of parliamentarians worldwide. While trends point to progressive increase in this area, the global rate of representation remains painfully low considering that women are more than half of the world's population. Only 17 percent of the countries across the globe (33 countries) currently have 30 percent or more women in their parliaments. Clearly more needs to be done in all parts of the world- in the developed as well as developing countries, including in the Arab region. We have noted the encouraging increase in women's representation in Tunisia and Libya through the recent elections and are confident that national efforts in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya will lead to further improvements in this important area.

This is a reality that temporary special measures (TSMs) including quotas have proven to be a very effective tool in promoting women's participation in the electoral/political processes. The majority of the countries currently having 30% or more women in their parliaments are those that have implemented some type of such measures.

As Ambassador Mervat rightly noted yesterday, removing injustices against women and helping to ensure they are adequately and appropriately included in the electoral and political processes in their societies is not a "favor"; it is their right. Additionally and equally important, this is a legal and political obligation for all State parties to CEDAW and the nations that have endorsed the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action; because by signing these important documents they have committed themselves to implementing TSMs to increase women's chances of winning seats in democratic political competitions. One of the important components of the existing international legal framework on TSMs is CEDAW General Recommenda-

tions 25 which can play a key role in guiding the efforts of national authorities on issues related to TSMs. Addressing the inequalities women are facing is also a requirement of the Security Council resolution 1325.

It was rightly noted in the previous presentations that there are electoral systems which are more friendly and adaptable to TSMs particularly quotas; additionally, it is important to note that the existing international frameworks, particularly the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as General Assembly resolutions on women's political participation, require countries to review the differential impact of their electoral systems on the political participation of women and their representation in elected bodies and to adjust or reform those systems where necessary. Therefore, when making decisions on electoral systems and processes, the above important international commitments need to be kept in mind.

We should also note that there is no one- size-fits- all approach that would fit all contexts, and that there are a wide range of TSMs which depending on the context can produce results. As noted in CEDAW General Recommendation 25, TSMs can include measures and policies such as: outreach or support programs, allocation or reallocation of resources, preferential treatment, targeted recruitment, hiring and promotion, numerical goals connected with time frame, and quota systems.

Capacity- building for women candidates (both before and after they are elected) is of critical importance. Women candidates can not emerge from a vacuum. Long term leadership training efforts are needed to allow a new class of women leaders to emerge.

Election-related violence is another issue that would need to be kept in mind when addressing the challenges women are facing as voter and candidates, as this phenomenon has disproportionate impacts on women as voters and candidates. It is widely believed that women and men participate in greater numbers as voters and candidates where basic security is assured. Preliminary research shows that women's participation remains low in contexts where electoral processes are marred by violence and intimidation.

The situation of women's presence in judiciary and executive branches, across the globe, does not seem to be more encouraging than in parliaments. Although the number of countries with women as Head of Government, Head of State or both has more than doubled since 2005, the total number in 2012 (17) remains modest. The percentage of women ministers worldwide is also only 16.7 percent in 2012.

Lack of gender disaggregated data in the electoral process is a challenge, almost in all parts of the world, which can hinder the efforts to fully identify trends and undertake proper measures to address the challenges concerning women's political participation. This issue requires special attention by all those concerned including EMBs given that without concrete data it will be extremely difficult to take the best decisions.

And finally, we need to ensure that gender becomes part of the national debates on all aspects of the electoral process. It is also crucial to work with men and women in all related areas, including in politics, to shift attitudes and perceptions and work towards greater gender equality. The need to address the inequalities against women should become a priority for all, for both men and women.

Let me conclude by stressing that supporting women in their journey towards equality including in the electoral and political process is one of the highest priorities for the Secretary-General of the United Nations and for the entire UN system. In this regard, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs (who is also the UN Focal Point for electoral assistance activities) has asked for all UN needs assessment missions to place this issue high on their agenda and to explore the possible ways through which we can help member states achieve this noble goal. We therefore stand ready to continue to provide support to nationally owned and nationally led efforts all over the world including in the Arab region, to ensure that women will have the place they deserve in the political and electoral processes in their societies.

Thank you.





## Annex 2.9 Closing Statements:

### *Mr. Carlos Valenzuela*

Chief Electoral Adviser, UNDP Electoral Support  
in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia

I have been asked to make the closing statement of this Forum. I am not sure it is very wise that I do so because I have lost my voice and since yesterday I have no voice; but I hope it does not mean that I have lost my vote. And this is a little bit ironic that I lose my voice in this event, especially, given that today, the tenth of December, is the International Human Rights' Day and this year's theme is "My Voice Counts", so I hope my lack of voice also counts.

But it is important that the voice of women and men of Egypt, Tunisia and Libya have been heard quite loud and clear during these two days of discussions regarding women's participation in the first very historic parliamentary elections post revolution.

I am a person who likes to speak a lot. When I have the microphone, I cannot be stopped so it is probably a good thing that I lost my voice because it made me listen a lot instead of talking. I listened quite carefully, and I was really delighted because I work in the 3 countries on electoral assistance and I think that I know a lot of what is going on and just listening to the depth of discussions I really realize that there is so much out there to learn.

The discussions were really very enriching, they were very fruitful and they were very enlightening.

So, as a member of the organizing committee of this Forum, I am very satisfied because I think that the objectives of this Forum have been achieved and one of the main objectives was to put all of you together, to be able to share these different experiences and different knowledge and to learn from each other.

From the United Nations and particularly from the Electoral Assistance in the Arab Region, we like to say that what we bring to the table is our international perspective and the comparative analysis. All the sessions on elections are very political and therefore very locally owned. So we never recommend anything. But we do like to enrich the discussions and bring the international experience so that local decisions can be made in a much more informed manner.

It is not an accident that I am the Head of the UN Electoral Assistance in the three countries of the Arab Spring that came out with early parliamentary elections; because as different as all these countries are, the processes are very specific. But we do believe firmly that all of these events have confirmed it clearly, that there is a lot to be learned and a lot to be taught by putting together the neighbours of Libya, Tunisia and Egypt and help promote the consolidation of the electoral identity of the Sub-region. Every single event that we have been able to support, where we encouraged this kind of discussions, networking, experience and knowledge sharing has been fruitful to everybody. And I would like to repeat the words of my colleague, Mansour from the UN Headquarters that what is happening here in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya in terms of elections is being very carefully looked at because it is really an example and a building block for all the work that we do in electoral assistance in the UN throughout the world. So you know, this part of the world has been at the centre of the world's attention for many months and it will continue to be so.

And that is another reason for which I would like to thank all of you for being here, putting so much passion, interest and commitment to the discussions and for making our work so rewarding and so motivating.

So, all I can say in closing this Forum is that the promotion of this networking between the three neighbour countries continues to be a priority of our work in electoral assistance, and particularly the work where putting women's role and participation in electoral and public life in general, it is also one of the priorities of the UN.

In the name of the UN family and in everybody's name, including myself, thank you very much for being here and for all your work.

Shukran Gazilan.

# Concept Note and Background Papers on Key Issues\*

<b>Annex 3a : Concept Note</b>	.....	<b>99</b>
<b>Annex 3b : Session I</b>	.....	<b>105</b>
Special measures to enhance women's representation in elected bodies: international and regional perspectives		
<b>Annex 3c : Session II</b>	.....	<b>110</b>
Women's participation as candidates: international and regional perspectives		
<b>Annex 3d : Session III</b>	.....	<b>119</b>
Women's participation as voters in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia – challenges and opportunities		
<b>Annex 3e : Session IV</b>	.....	<b>123</b>
Gender sensitivity in electoral administration		
<b>Annex 3f : Session V</b>	.....	<b>128</b>
Role of civil society in promoting women's participation		

\* Documents provided by UN agencies in question.



## Annex 3a

### CONCEPT NOTE

#### I. INTRODUCTION

##### **Background: the “Arab spring” and social/political change in the region**

Egypt, Libya and Tunisia share some common political and cultural elements. In 2011 they were shaken by the fresh energy of what is known as “the Arab spring” in which people publicly expressed their tiredness of dictatorships and their desire for a democratic change of government. In all three cases, after massive and continuous demonstrations, there was an overthrow of the dictator, and the three countries are currently in a transition period to build democracy. Additionally the three countries chose the holding of early parliamentary elections as their major first step in their transition, in view of advancing the drafting of a new constitution. Following their respective parliamentary elections, each of the three countries is currently undertaking new constitutional drafting processes and debates on electoral systems, electoral institutions and practices of elections are an important part of the political agenda. In this path to democracy, there are international technical assistance teams accompanying the respective process (albeit with very different mandates).

Despite their similarities, Egypt, Libya and Tunisia, are very different and the context in each country is quite specific, which is reflected in the way they are experiencing the political transition in general and the electoral process in particular. Tunisia conducted its elections of the National Constituent Assembly in October 2011, which is currently in session. Egypt had parliamentary elections from November 2011 to March 2012 and presidential elections in May 2012, and is currently engaged in the constitutional drafting, to be followed by a constitutional referendum and new parliamentary elections. Libya completed the National Congress elections in July 2012 and will soon engage in constitutional drafting, to be put to a referendum.

##### **Context: women’s participation in the recent parliamentary elections in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia**

In all of the elections and subsequent constitutional reviews, women have been active and engaged participants and drivers of change. Egypt, Libya and Tunisia saw very strong and active participation of women as voters, particularly in comparison with previous processes under the former regimes. For example, 45% of registered voters in the first national elections in Libya in over 40 years were women. In terms of the election of women to the parliaments, the

results have differed. In Egypt, the representation of women in the upper and lower chambers of the dissolved Parliament was 2%, whereas under the former regime it stood at 12%. In Tunisia, one of the more advanced countries in the region in terms of women's representation, women took 27% of parliamentary seats, for a total of 47 seats. In Libya, special measures ensured that there were women candidates in the list- PR race, yet (as the number of PR seats was only 80 of 200 total of seats), overall women's representation in the new National Congress is only 16% (or 33 seats, of which 32 were won via PR and only one woman candidate won out in the remaining 120 majoritarian constituency seats).

Women represent the majority - more than 50% - of the population in each of the three countries and, in some localities, women represent the vast majority of the population. Apart from upholding its normative obligations on gender equality and women's empowerment, the UN is committed to the promotion of women's participation in political processes including supporting representation in the decision-making bodies. The United Nations Working Group on discrimination against women in law and in practice stressed that political transitions "offer unprecedented opportunities for progress on women's human rights, despite there being a risk of regression and new forms of discrimination." The UN Secretary-General clearly indicated that one of the main priorities for his second term includes support to the political transition in the Arab countries and, within that priority, specifically emphasized efforts necessary to promote women's political participation and representation.

Women's political influence is not only reliant upon a critical mass of women being represented in decision-making processes. Beyond numbers are systemic issues such as the positions women hold, capacities, and power relationships – all of which affect their ability to influence policy debates. Again expectations have not been met: in Tunisia none of the key government positions are held by women; in Egypt, President Morsi's promise to appoint a female Vice President has not materialised and, out of 35 ministerial positions, only two ministers are women. It would seem that women who were at the forefront of demanding regime change are now in danger of being excluded from the new decision making bodies.

To better understand the factors influencing women's effective and meaningful political participation in the recent parliamentary elections in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia UNDP, UN Women and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) are organising a joint forum with regional and international participation to take place in Cairo (Egypt), on 9-10 December 2012.

## II. OBJECTIVES

### Overall purpose

In their support to the electoral institutions of Egypt, Libya and Tunisia, the United Nations and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) have promoted the importance of sharing comparative experiences and pointed to the advantage of networking with other electoral commissions in the region. Additionally, efforts to learn lessons from the Egyptian, Libyan and Tunisian elections are currently on-going, the products of which it is hoped will enrich future elections in the three countries and the region.

All these similarities, differences, efforts and experiences can be shared and harnessed in regional events on electoral issues which will increase understanding and give electoral administration officials the opportunity to network with other election administrators, academics, civil society organizations representatives and experts working in the field of elections.

### General objective

The event is intended as a forum for a broad comparative perspective, analysis and discussion on the lessons-learned on women's participation and representation in the first post-revolutionary parliamentary elections in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia. The forum will aim to assess how women fared and why in the post-revolutionary parliamentary elections in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia, emphasizing participation as candidates, voters, members of the EMB and civil society, as well as effective representation of women in parliament.

### Specific objectives

Through sharing experiences, knowledge and information, the forum aims:

- a. To identify the concrete electoral measures (and their efficiency) that each country put in place to guarantee substantial representation of women in the new post-revolution parliaments in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia;
- b. To present and assess other measures designed in the region and throughout the world in order to improve women representation in parliaments;
- c. To identify particular factors that have led to the strong participation of women in the elections in all three countries, with a view to ensuring that this high level of participation continues in future elections;
- d. To identify how electoral authorities incorporated a gender perspective in their work, (including electoral preparation and voter outreach) and assess the participation of women as members of the respective electoral administrations;



- e. To analyze the influence and good practice of support provided by women groups participation in the preparation for the elections (civic education, electoral observation);
- f. To propose ways and measures to ensure higher female participation and representation in future parliamentary elections in the three countries.
- g. To review the role of International organizations, key activities and programs that they supported and any lessons learned.
- h. To assess political parties role as key stakeholders in ensuring higher women's representation.

### **III. TARGET PARTICIPANTS**

The forum will bring together policy decision makers, legislators and national opinion leaders from Egypt, Libya and Tunisia such as:

- a. Members of the committees for the drafting of the legislations (constitution or electoral laws);
- b. Government representatives;
- c. Elected and non elected female (and male) candidates;
- d. Members from the main political parties;
- e. Academics and journalists (opinion leaders);
- f. CSOs representatives / female electoral observers;
- g. Members of national media;
- h. Representatives of international organizations

Noting that that any discussion of women's realities and aspirations needs the engagement of and support of men, the forum is for men and women (i.e. not 'women only' event). Indeed, partnerships with men for gender equality are essential.

Ideally, the number of national participants should not exceed 80 (25 from each country and five extra participants for Egypt as the host country). This does not include support staff from UN electoral projects, UNDP Regional Centre Cairo, UN Women and IFES, or speakers from other countries.

### **IV. METHODOLOGY**

The forum will use different formats: presentations in plenary sessions, discus-

sion sessions and thematic working groups to ensure an open dialogue among participants.

For the working groups' session, each group of participants will deliberate separately on a specific theme with the help of a facilitator and report back to the plenary session.

The debate will be facilitated by moderators and a rapporteur who will summarize the main observations, conclusions and recommendations for the participants. The debates will be in Arabic but simultaneous translation in English will be provided.

## V. PROGRAM

**The forum has five main components and a closing session:**

- ***Session 1. – Electoral arrangements to enhance women's representation***
  - A. Review and analysis of Egypt, Libya and Tunisia's experience with special measures for promoting substantial electoral arrangements to enhance women's representation. Description of challenges and opportunities.
  - B. Other international examples (UK, Palestine, Nepal).
- ***Session 2. Women's participation as candidates***
  - A. Review and analysis of the experience and results of women contesting as candidates in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia.
  - B. Showcases of good practice/specific programs of support to female candidates.
  - C. The role of political parties (candidate selection, role of financing).
  - D. Campaigning and role of the media.
- ***Session 3.- Women's participation as voters***
  - A. Review and analysis of the participation of women as voters in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia. Description of challenges and opportunities.
  - B. Showcases of specific programs to support female voter participation.
- ***Session 4. – Women in EMBs and gender perspective in electoral administration***
  - A. Review and analysis of Egypt, Libya and Tunisia's experience with women as members of EMBs. Description of challenges and opportunities.
  - B. Assessing gender perspectives in the electoral preparations.
  - C. Other international examples.

- **Session 5. – The role of CSOs and international organizations in supporting women's political participation**
  - A. Review and analysis of Egypt, Libya and Tunisia's experience with women organizations as promoters of voter education and transparency (including electoral observation). Description of challenges and opportunities.
  - B. Role of international organizations.
- **Closing session:** (two short sessions): synthesis, recommendations and next steps; closing remarks.

## VI. EXPECTED RESULTS

Comparative experiences of regional counterparts will facilitate increased gender sensitivity in the design of new constitutional and electoral processes.

Commitment to women's political participation and its ability to promote credible electoral processes and empower women is enhanced.

Production of a report will enhance knowledge development on the topic of women's effective and meaningful electoral participation, and can be used as a tool for guidance/advocacy in the region. The main conclusions and recommendations of the forum together with the presentations in Arabic will be published and circulated among all participants.

This forum is not intended as an end in itself, but rather as one in a series of forums as part of a long-term capacity development strategy for women in politics in the sub-region that has been pursued by the UN and IFES.

## VII. DATE

The forum is to take place during a two-day period, on 9 and 10 December, 2012.

## Annex 3b

### Session I - Special measures to enhance women's representation in elected bodies: international and regional perspectives

#### Key issues

- How can special measures enhance women's representation in elected bodies? Quotas, reserved seats, parity law, zebra list, other measures
- Why are special measures necessary to guarantee women representation in elected bodies?
- Review and analysis of the transitional special measures adopted for the first post-revolution parliamentary elections in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia
- Review and analysis of an additional case-study (TBD)

#### **Presentation 1: *"Special measures to enhance women's substantive representation in the first post-revolution parliamentary elections in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia"***

#### **Introduction**

1. Women represent the majority - more than 50% - of the population in each of the three countries and, in some areas, women represent the vast majority of the population. The active participation of women in political processes, including substantive representation in the decision-making bodies, is rightly perceived as a necessary component of the political transition in the Arab Region if the process is to result in just and truly democratic societies. Moreover, given the role the new parliaments were expected to have in the drafting of a new constitution in each of the three countries, the meaningful representation of women in these bodies was identified as a priority goal of the electoral processes.

2. Nevertheless, international experience shows that in many countries in the world, including the Arab Region, women are unlikely to be represented in parliament in a meaningful manner. Cultural and social conditions often create enormous obstacles for the active participation of women in public life, making it very difficult for women candidates to be nominated and voted to elected decision-making bodies. For these reasons, special measures in the design of the electoral system have often been introduced in order to enhance and guarantee women's representation in elected bodies. The purpose of this presentation is to review the measures adopted (if any) to enhance women's representation in the first elected, post-revolution parliaments and make a comparative analysis of their effects and results.

Special measures to enhance women's participation in Egypt

3. In Egypt, during the Mubarak years, the electoral system established a number of reserved seats for women – out of 508 members of the People's Assembly, 64 seats (or 12.5%) were reserved for women. Moreover, the President had the prerogative to appoint ten members to the Peoples' Assembly and many of these appointees were women. As for the *Shoura* Council, two thirds of the 264 seats were elected and one third (88 seats) were appointed; the President usually took this opportunity to appoint a substantial number of women to the Council.

4. When the legal framework for the parliamentary elections was being reviewed and modified after the toppling of the regime, however, the quota reserving 64 seats for women was dismissed, as it was seen as a remnant of the former regime (interestingly, the obligatory quota for "farmers and workers" was maintained). For the purpose of the 2011-2012 People's Assembly and *Shoura* Council elections, Egypt eventually adopted a mixed parallel system, with 75% of seats being elected through a list proportional representation (PR) system and 25% through a majoritarian system.

5. The only measure introduced to "favor" women representation was the condition that, for every list presented for the PR election, a woman candidate would need to be included. There was no mention of where the woman candidate was to be placed, and in the great majority of cases women candidates were at the bottom of the candidate lists. Interestingly, earlier drafts of the electoral law had stipulated stricter measures as to the placement of women in more "winnable" position in the lists, but the proposal was dismissed.

6. The outcome for the parliamentary results in Egypt was that very few women were elected through the PR race and none through the majoritarian race, with extremely disappointing results in terms of women's representation: there were 11 women in the People's Assembly (of those, two were appointed by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, SCAF) and four in the *Shoura* Council. No women were elected in the majoritarian race for either the People's Assembly or the *Shoura* Council elections. In total, women accounted only for 2% of the total number of members of parliament, placing Egypt, from an international perspective, at a very low level in terms of women representation in its parliament.

### ***Special measures to enhance women participation in Tunisia***

7. In Tunisia's case, a very different picture arises. Before the change of regime in 2011, the lower house was elected using a mixed system where the block vote was used to elect 80% of the seats in 25 constituencies (all won by the ruling party in 2009) and 20% were allocated using proportional representation to the other parties. There were no special measures in the electoral law in order to promote women's representation. In any case, the 214-member parliament elected in 2009 had 59 women members (28%). Regardless, given the limited powers of the institution, the composition of the body had no significance in terms of women's participation in politics.

8. For the election of the 2011 Constituent Assembly, Tunisia chose a list PR system.

The authorities introduced the principle of “parity”, by demanding that all lists contesting the election needed to alternate men and women candidates (“zebra” or “zippered” lists). The electoral law was silent, however, as to who should be placed on top of the lists. A large majority of lists were headed by men candidates, and only seven percent of lists were headed by women, a total of 128 for the 27 in-country constituencies.

9. Given the high number of competing lists and the fragmented nature of the results, the effect was that 59 women were elected for the Constituent Assembly, or 27.2% of total elected members of parliament. Forty of the elected women belong to *Ennahda*, which was the most successful party at the polls, winning approximately 42% of the seats. Many smaller parties, which won only between one and three seats, had few women elected. While the results were disappointing to many that expected a larger percentage of women being represented in the Constituent Assembly, Tunisia’s women’s representation in the Constituent Assembly is the largest in the region and more than six percent above the world average.

### ***Special measures to enhance women participation in Libya***

10. Libya’s experience in terms of special measure for women’s representation has elements of both Tunisia’s and Egypt’s experience. During the initial discussions to establish the legal framework for the July 2012 election of the General National Congress (GNC), a purely majoritarian system was proposed with 10% of seats reserved for women. Following many debates and counter-proposals, Libya’s electoral law finally adopted a mixed parallel system (such as Egypt’s). As a result, 80 seats out of a total 200 were to be elected by list PR, whereas 120 were to be elected by a majoritarian system.

11. For the PR election, the law established “vertical” parity (such as was the case in Tunisia) as well as a “horizontal” parity – meaning that political entities putting forward more than one list in different constituencies needed to ensure that there was alternation between men and women candidates at the top of the list. As in Egypt, the quota for women’s seats was dropped and there were no special measures for women’s representation in the majoritarian race.

12. The electoral results in terms of women representation were mixed: for the PR race, the vertical and horizontal “parity” worked well: out of 80 elected candidates, 32 were women (or 40% of PR seats). But because PR elected members of parliament represented only 40% of all elected candidates, and given that only one woman was elected out of 120 majoritarian seats, the overall result is mitigated, and the total number of women elected, 33, represents only 16.5% of all elected members. While less than Tunisia’s Constituent Assembly, Libya’s GNC obtained a much larger percentage of women representation than Egypt’s and, at the end, a higher percentage than the initial “women quota” had proposed.

### ***Initial conclusions: special measures and women representation in parliament***

13. Some conclusions can be drawn from a comparative analysis of the experiences in the three countries. First, the very low score of women candidates for the majoritarian race in both Egypt and Libya indicate that, without special measures, women candidates are unlikely to be elected in the region. Secondly, the list PR works well when alternation between men

and women candidates (“parity”) is established (such as in Tunisia), but it is more effective when the “parity” demands that alternation should also include women candidates on top of lists.

14. The three experiences confirm that, overall, special measures to guarantee meaningful representation of women are required, that majoritarian systems are less “friendly” for women representation (at least in the Arab Region) and that PR systems are more conducive for the inclusion of special measures. Proportional systems are also more conducive to implementation of affirmative-action measures than are majority systems. Without the pressure of having to win in a “winner-take-all” majority/plurality system, parties may be more amenable to present a more diversified candidate list that can include more women. Candidate lists offer more potential opportunities for parties to be increasingly responsive to women’s movements or lobbying efforts, both within the party and in the broader electorate. The Tunisian experience shows that vertical “parity” in the PR lists will not, by itself, suffice to elect a more gender balanced parliament than had previously been the case.

15. Majoritarian systems are notably less friendly in ensuring women’s representation than PR systems, as are “mixed” systems. Majoritarian systems generally provide less incentive for parties to promote a woman if a male candidate is seen as maximizing the party’s chances of winning the single seat up for election in a given constituency. Nevertheless, the small magnitude of electoral districts (meaning, the small number of elected members per district) as well as the proliferation of numerous and smaller districts, are not supportive of women’s representation, even in PR systems. This is because, in general, the greater the district magnitude – or the more representatives elected from a single district – the more likely that women will be named as candidates and will be elected. The principle is the same as that for PR systems in general: where the district magnitude is greater, the pressures associated with single-mandate winner-take-all races are removed, giving political parties a greater incentive to nominate a diverse slate of candidates, including women.

## **Quotas**

16. The discussion of women quotas in Egypt is also quite interesting: all of the elected women have expressed their disappointment with the lack of women candidates’ success at the polls, blaming the fact that women were placed at the end of candidate lists, significantly reducing their chances of winning. But interestingly, they are united in their opposition to any quota system. Quotas, a popular approach across the Arab Region to bring more women into politics, have a decidedly bad reputation in Egypt. Part of the problem is the anachronistic reservations for “peasants” and “workers.” But undoubtedly, the close association of quotas with the previous regime, which manipulated them for its benefit, doesn’t help. Quotas for women have been used a few times in Egypt’s past, most recently in the 2010 election when the majority of women in these seats were appointed by Mubarak rather than elected. Not surprisingly, the quota largely benefitted candidates from the ruling National Democratic Party and enjoyed little popularity.

17. Quotas had also been proposed in initial versions of the Libyan electoral law (where the electoral system under consideration was exclusively majoritarian), but were dropped from the final text. At the end, the adoption of “zebra” lists resulted, as mentioned, in 16.5% women representation in the National Congress, higher than the originally-proposed 10% quota.



*Looking forward*

18. While discussions are on-going in the three countries over the electoral system for future elections, and in particular for parliamentary elections, it would be advisable to reflect on the effectiveness of these measures, as well as exploring other measures to guarantee a more meaningful women representation in the parliaments of the three countries. Any interest in special measures to enhance representation of women should be an integral and explicit part of the discussions regarding the choice of electoral systems.

## **Annex 3c**

### **Session II - Women's participation as candidates: international and regional perspectives**

#### **Key issues**

- Challenges for women candidates in the region
- The role of political parties in candidate selection - internal voting mechanisms in political parties
- Role of political financing
- Role of the media in campaigns
- Role of civil society, specifically women NGOs and international organizations, in supporting women candidates

#### **Presentation – “Experience of women's candidates in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia”**

##### **Introduction**

1. Active participation of all major segments of society in political processes, women as well as men, is an indispensable aspect of a strong democracy. The success of the political transition to democracy in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia rests in part on the clear and substantive participation in the process by all major stakeholders, including women. This includes representation in all decision-making bodies, in particular those parliaments and bodies charged with a role in the development of the new constitutional provisions and the construction of the body of law that follows the constitutional review. Herein lies the importance of women being elected as members of the first parliamentary bodies following the change of regime.
2. Electoral processes can no longer be considered credible if they don't include the opportunity for full and equal participation by women. Yet women candidates in many parts of the world (including those from Egypt, Libya and Tunisia) face enormous obstacles and disadvantages when compared to male candidates. The purpose of this presentation is to introduce the discussion on the specific challenges and opportunities for women candidates in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia as evidenced by the experience of the first parliamentary elections following the regime changes in 2011.

***Nominating women candidates***

3. The first step in the process of being elected is being nominated as a candidate, whether as an individual candidate in majoritarian systems or as part of a list for proportional representation (PR) systems. Political parties in the region are not, on the whole, very aware of the benefits of mainstreaming gender considerations and of nominating women candidates. The requirement that, for PR races, women be part of the lists - at least one woman per list in Egypt and “parity” (or equal number of men and women candidates) in Tunisia and Libya - actually forced political parties to nominate women. In Tunisia few lists were headed by women thereby reducing the chances of greater representation of women. And while the “parity” clause in the lists was enthusiastically endorsed by the transitional authorities in Tunisia and Libya, many political parties and entities were highly critical of the measures, claiming undue interference and stressing that in many parts of the countries (rural, conservative areas) they really struggled to find enough women willing to become candidates, though their level of motivation in identifying acceptable candidates given the compulsory nature of the exercise, is difficult to ascertain. It is therefore not certain that the “parity” in the PR lists will be maintained.
4. There were no special measures to encourage women candidates in the majoritarian races in Egypt and Libya (both had adopted a “mixed parallel” system, where members of parliament were chosen through two different systems). Prevailing societal, religious, economic and cultural factors and long history of absence of women in decision-making positions in Egypt and Libya made it unlikely that women would be elected in numbers which would guarantee meaningful representation in the parliament through the majoritarian system, particularly without the presence of any special measures. Such conditions compromise women’s ability to compete equally as candidates with men. In Libya, for example, it is clear that the special measure employed on the PR system was decisive in getting women elected, but in the absence of special measures in the majoritarian race all but one woman failed to be elected (compared to 32 elected through the PR system, where special measures were applied).

***Women candidates in the parliamentary elections: figures***

5. In Egypt, the High Electoral Commission (HEC) did not publish any gender-related

statistics regarding the parliamentary elections, but some information was reported by National Council of Women, the Egyptian Center for Women's Rights and the Arab National Human Rights Initiative. According to these sources, there were 984 women candidates for the People's Assembly elections (633 for the PR race and 351 for the majoritarian one), representing 12.1% of the total number of candidates for both races in the three rounds. For the Shoura Council elections, the percentage was lower: 7.2% of total candidates for both races and the three rounds, which amounted to a total of 196 candidates (128 PR and 68 majoritarian). In the PR lists, few women were in "winnable" positions – for example, in the first round of the PA elections, only four women were on top of the list, only 1.8% of all lists.

6. Overall, although consistently weak, placement of female candidates on the Egyptian lists varied somewhat according to coalitions. In all, only 7% of the 670 female candidates recorded in party list races were placed in the first quartile of their party lists. Parties unaffiliated with a coalition placed women in the first quartile of list positions 9.5% of the time and were more likely to include more than one female candidate on a list. In contrast, none of the 46 female candidates running under parties affiliated with the Islamist Bloc were placed in the first quartile positions. 94% of Islamist Bloc female candidates were placed in the bottom quartile of their party lists.
7. In Libya, posters of women candidates were often torn or damaged, and this was a source of complaint by women. Some parties only included photos of women fully face-covered veiled. Equally, in Egypt posters for salafist candidates would not include pictures of the women candidate, which would be replaced by a flower and, in some cases, a picture of her husband. A number of women's groups in Egypt complained that not displaying the woman candidate's photo was a violation of the HEC decision 21/2011 on electoral campaign (specifically article 2 which speaks of the commitment to abstain from discrimination on basis of sex). The Egyptian Centre for Women's Rights points out that following the HEC's silence on the salafists approach to campaigning, more parties proceeded to cancel the image of female candidates from their lists, for example the Wafd party in 2nd
8. In Tunisia, the "parity" clause resulted in women representing just under half of candidates (over 5,502 women candidates from 11,000 total candidates for the 27 in-country constituencies), but only 7% of the lists were headed by women (128 lists). Among the 7% where women were head of lists, we find the following distribution: 3% of independent PR lists were headed by women, as opposed to 7% of PR political parties' lists and 35% in the PR coalition lists. The largest proportion of

lists headed by women was found in the Tunis 1 constituency, where 20% of lists featured women at the top. This confirms the idea that it is harder for independent lists to put women as head of lists, that coalitions have a better chance at nominating women and that women head of lists are more prominent in urban than rural areas.

9. In Libya, a total of 2,501 candidates, including 89 women (3%), participated as individuals in the majoritarian race while 1,207 candidates, including 545 women (44%), contested the proportional representation race. In total, 634 women candidates ran for a seat in Libya's National Congress. Out of total 376 PR lists (representing 130 registered political entities), 140 were headed by women (encouraged by the zebra horizontal list system). In most constituencies, the number of lists headed by men formed the majority. In a hotly-contested constituency in Tripoli, for example, only four out of 77 PR lists were headed by women. When not obliged by the electoral law, it is clear that entities default to male leadership in terms of both numbers of male candidates in the majoritarian system and male-headed lists in the PR system.

### ***Challenges to women candidates – societal barriers***

10. In Libya, posters of women candidates were often torn or damaged, and this was a source of complaint by women. Some parties only included photos of women fully face-covered veiled. Equally, in Egypt posters for salafist candidates would not include pictures of the women candidate, which would be replaced by a flower and, in some cases, a picture of her husband. A number of women's groups in Egypt complained that not displaying the woman candidate's photo was a violation of the HEC decision 21/2011 on electoral campaign (specifically article 2 which speaks of the commitment to abstain from discrimination on basis of sex). The Egyptian Centre for Women's Rights points out that following the HEC's silence on the salafists approach to campaigning, more parties proceeded to cancel the image of female candidates from their lists, for example the Wafd party in 2nd Constituency in Minya Governorate, a concerning precedent for a liberal party.
11. Some conservative parties in Libya, where the zippered horizontal and vertical list for parties was implemented, went to lengths to minimize women's participation. For example, some parties changed their names across different constituencies so that they could thereby avoid having to place women on top of their lists.

12. In Libya, as well as in rural Egypt and Tunisia, women historically have held very few leadership positions and have had very limited decision-making opportunities. Therefore, there is a lack of well-known female role models in positions of leadership, particularly political leadership, for people to reference. This contributed to a lack of confidence – by both men and women - in a woman's abilities or inclinations to perform such roles. Further, there is immense social pressure for women not to participate in public life. Candidates often highlight the lack of opportunity and access for women to communicate with each other, mostly being confined to domestic life. Such conditions compromise women's ability to compete equally as candidates with men. In this context, a number of activities were conducted in the three countries to develop women's capacities, including campaign skills workshops for women candidates and sharing comparative experiences via forums featuring a number of visiting women MPs. Additionally, resources were shared and networking was encouraged.
13. Women candidates found it also difficult to mobilize financial resources; sometimes they needed permission from their husband or family. In Egypt, the short time allowed for candidate registration may have diminished the access for female candidates for the People's Assembly and Shoura Council elections. The fact that political parties in Egypt were allowed to exceed the maximum expenditure with impunity negatively affected women candidates, especially in the majoritarian race, as they found themselves faced with electoral blocs who could spend without limit. An example is the case of Jamila Esmail, an independent candidate in Cairo: a public media star, she started with a significant advantage in visibility and public credibility compared to most candidates, but had to face candidates from political blocs with a huge financial expenditure. In the end, she lost by fewer than 1,000 votes. In Libya, the short registration and campaigning period adversely affected women's ability to mobilize both financial and human resources required to mount campaign; indeed, women candidates reported that managing resource mobilization and managing a campaign team formed two of their biggest challenges.
14. In all three countries, the profile of women running for majority seats was generally urban (in Egypt, over 40% came from Cairo, Giza, and Alexandria) and white collar (over 74% in Egypt), indicating that political participation may be largely inaccessible to working class and rural women. Although larger district magnitudes for closed list races tend to favor female candidates, the vast geographic size of some rural districts coupled with limited access to campaign resources and traditional

restrictions on women's travel in many areas heightened the challenges for women running for office in these districts.

#### Challenges to women candidates: inadequate media coverage

15. In the three countries, media coverage of women candidates was found to be insufficient (less coverage than men candidates), inappropriate (women candidates presented solely as wives and mothers) and not supportive of their causes (lack of focus).
16. Media monitoring conducted by the Tunisian Association of Women Democrats showed that during the campaign period, 51% of media space covered male candidates while only 5% was dedicated to female candidates, although nearly half the candidates were women. The European Union Electoral Observation mission reported similar results, with women candidates obtaining 12% of coverage and men 88%. This is probably due to the fact that the media concentrated on heads of lists, and few women were in that position. In a lessons-learned workshop with women candidates who had taken part in UNDP-CAWTAR capacity-building activities, women candidates stated that interactions with media often focused on their party's views on women in society and that they often felt they were not taken seriously as candidates with their own ideas and opinions on issues facing the country, even within their own parties. Difficulties in securing a fair share of the campaign funds made available by the authorities were also cited.
17. In Libya, where the free media landscape is in its infancy, promoting any coverage of women candidates, let alone fair and equal coverage, was a challenging undertaking. Suggested guidelines for media coverage of women were shared via UN as well as media monitoring guidelines. However, given the compressed campaigning timeframe, and few trained media actors in Libya, only a modest media monitoring effort was achieved, consisting of fewer than 20 monitors over a three-week period. Women were included in campaign posters of their parties, sometimes in a prominent position, other times with small photos. Women candidates reported that media nearly always by-passed them to interview any men present at same events, even those who weren't campaigning. Elected women continue to report the same phenomena so the problem persists.



## Women candidates and political parties

18. As major stakeholders of the electoral process, nomination of women candidates depends greatly on women's role within political parties and the willingness of the parties to put forward women candidates. With the exception of independent candidates, most women aspiring to elected office are dependent on political party (or political entity, in the Libyan case) structures for nominations and support, both on the campaign trail and following their election. To a great extent, parties determine when and if women will become players in the political arena, and to what degree. Yet in none of the three countries do political parties/entities have a culture of promoting women into leadership positions, nor are they known for the selection of women candidates. (A possible exception in Tunisia is the PDM, the only party to apply alternation both vertically and horizontally).
19. Some political entities in Libya, when confronted by special "parity" measures stipulating that women be included on PR lists, went to lengths to avoid identifying and fielding female candidates. In some cases, entities registered under different names in different constituencies, which enabled them to overcome the legal obligation to alternate male-headed lists and female-headed across constituencies (the horizontal "zipper"). In other cases, entities poached female candidates who intended to run as individuals in the majoritarian race. Several of these women had no idea what "their" entity stood for or, in some cases, even the entity's title. There was little effort to genuinely cultivate relationships with female candidates.
20. Overall, political parties/entities did not provide training or special support to its women candidates, and any support provided came mostly from outside party structures. There is clearly a need to work with political parties/entities to strengthen, within their own structures, the role of women (gender mainstreaming and women empowerment), and support for women candidates.

## Looking forward: challenges and opportunities for women candidates in the future

21. The examples of Egypt, Libya and Tunisia in their first parliamentary elections following the regime changes in 2011 confirm the idea that development of women's political skills and knowledge requires sustained effort. Women aspiring to participate in public life require support in a number of significant areas which they

identify as challenges, namely lobbying, networking, public debating and getting messages across. The positive environment which is created as a result of women running as candidates provides fertile ground for further empowerment of women, as was shown repeatedly in the three countries examined. For example, it creates entry points to engage with political parties to get women's rights on the agenda. Informed debate and advocacy regarding special measures to fast track women's participation, which should be included in ways forward.

22. It is clear that work with political parties or entities is an essential component of a strategy to promote women's participation as candidates in the electoral race. Political parties or entities act as gatekeepers, controlling access to nominations and funding. They also play an important role in setting the tone of public discourse about the inclusion of women in political life, and in positioning their candidates as informed spokespersons on a variety of relevant issues aside from those related to their roles as daughters, wives and mothers. Awareness of the importance of women's role as leaders and active members of the political parties is vital to ensuring women are nominated and supported by political parties.



## Annex 3d

### Session III - Women's participation as voters in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia – challenges and opportunities

#### Key issues

- *Enhanced participation of women voters: where and why?*
- *Specific participation issues for voter registration and polling*
- *Role of voter outreach/education*
- *Role of the electoral administration – outreach to women voters, registration/ID campaigns, polling arrangements, standards of conduct*

**Presentation – “Enhanced participation of women as voters in the three post-revolutionary parliamentary elections: elements for a comparative analysis”**

#### Introduction

1. During the political transition in the Arab region, women have been active and engaged participants and drivers of change. Egypt, Libya and Tunisia saw very strong and active participation of women as voters, particularly in comparison with previous processes under the former regimes. Women were present in significant numbers during operations to directly register voters (Tunisia and Libya) and during the polling operations. The purpose of this presentation is to review the characteristics of this increased participation of women as voters, try to understand why this is the case and to evaluate conditions for sustained participation of women voters in the future.

#### **General considerations of female turnout in elections in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia**

2. Female participation in elections in Egypt and Tunisia during the previous regimes was weak but so was male participation, as the lack of trust in the process resulted in general voter apathy. Since its independence in 1951 until the coup led by Colonel Qaddafi in 1969, Libya had been a constitutional and hereditary monarchy. In 1954, the first women's rights group, the Women's Renaissance Society of Benghazi, formed and started campaigning for, amongst other things, women's suffrage. Women in Libya first gained the right to vote in 1963; however, since there were no elections before the 1969 coup and no elections afterwards they never had the opportunity to exercise their right. Therefore, the National Congress elections in 2012 were historic for many reasons, not least because it was the first time Libyan women voted.

3. In Egypt, turnout among both men and women in elections during the previous regime had been systematically anemic. For example, the state claimed that 27.5% of eligible voters participated in the 2010 parliamentary elections, but domestic groups such as the Egyptian Association for Community Participation Enhancement suggested that the true figure was closer to 10%. Turnout figures were unreliable in any case and were not disaggregated by gender, making it impossible to ascertain the level of women's participation in the polls as voters.

4. In all three countries, the expectations of having a genuine and credible process post-revolution increased the interest of the eligible voting population, and the electoral authorities had to face significant operational pressures given the expected high turnout rate amongst men and women voters.

### ***Female turnout for registration***

5. The first step towards the participation of women as voters is to ensure that female eligible voters are duly registered. Under the previous regimes, Egypt and Tunisia registered voters through their respective Ministries of Interior (Mols), and voter cards were produced for voters to present at the polling station. But the registers were perceived as incomplete and subject to politically manipulation, and therefore lacked the confidence of the population. For the post-revolutionary electoral processes, therefore, both countries decided to abolish the Mol-managed voter register and voter cards.

6. In Egypt, the decision was not to go for a stand-alone voter registration exercise, and instead to derive the voter register from the national ID database; additionally, it was decided that, in order to vote, a voter was required to present his/her national ID card. In terms of increasing women's participation, two issues were critical: how to ensure voters (in particular rural voters, and the women rural voters) knew where to vote, and the issue of national ID cards, for which many voters, women in particular, had no access. More than one million Egyptian women still lack identity cards and consequently do not enjoy the possibility of voting (not to mention access to government services including medical care in a public hospital, processing of a property title or deed, literacy programs, banking services and working opportunities). The Egyptian High Electoral Commission (HEC) published on its website the number of voters in the newly-created register in 2011, disaggregated by sex and per governorate. The figures showed that the total number of eligible females was 23,811,921 (or 47% of all 50,384,457 eligible voters).

7. In Tunisia, the authorities explored the same option as in Egypt, but decided that the national ID database alone was not suitable for deriving a voter register, as the address information in the database was not reliable enough. There was then an exercise in which voters could update their address and choose a polling center in which an approximate 55% of estimated eligible voters participated (of which 46% were women). The electoral authority

finally announced that all those eligible voters in the national ID database that did not participate in the update to select their polling center could vote in special centers set up for them.

8. In Libya, the 2012 electoral law provided a sound basis for universal suffrage. However, since there was no previous voter register and no suitable national database for deriving a voter register, it was decided that a stand-alone voter registration exercise would be conducted. Initial figures regarding female participation in the registration process were discouraging, which resulted in a surge of effort from the national electoral commission and civil society specifically targeting women, in order to encourage them to register to vote. Approximately 2.8 million people of an estimated 3.5 million eligible voters registered to vote in the National Congress elections. Of registered voters, approximately 1.3 million were women, or 45%.

### ***Female turnout for voting***

9. As mentioned at the beginning of the presentation, women's participation in the three parliamentary elections was extremely encouraging, although exact figures of overall (and female) turnout are hard to come by. In Libya, while those women who turned out to vote on 7 July were highly visible and enthusiastic, at the end of the process it was estimated that approximately 40% of the total 1.3 million women registered actually voted. Neither Tunisian nor Egyptian electoral authorities have the figures for female turnout. Polling stations were mostly designated as men's and or women's, so the women's turnout should have been relatively straightforward to calculate. However these figures were not made available (the Egyptian HEC have stated that this question was not consistently answered on the forms and the importance of gathering the information was underestimated). Nevertheless, voter turnout was high in Egypt. The extent of voter participation in Tunisia is similarly unclear though, as in Egypt, undoubtedly enthusiastic.

10. In the three countries, women were seen as voting in higher numbers than ever before. The long queues that were seen outside the female polling stations and the need to appoint more women officials to check veiled women in all three countries illustrated the enthusiastic participation of women voters in the three countries. Additionally, it has been suggested (without the support of hard data, so therefore still to be verified) that in very conservative areas where women's participation was traditionally low, their participation was strongly encouraged by Islamist parties (outlawed under previous regimes), which were strong contenders in the electoral race.

11. It appears clear that trust in the process was a major factor in the strong voter turnout, particularly in the case of female voters. Many efforts were conducted by the electoral authorities, civil society organizations and international partners to motivate and inform

women voters, which seem to have been at least partially successful. The voter information campaign conducted by the Tunisian electoral authorities consistently used images of both urban and rural women. Women featured prominently in a song UNDP produced in Tunisia to mobilize the electorate. Similarly, HNEC in Libya produced voter education materials attempting to represent different cross-sections of citizens, including women (visible face, wearing head scarves).

***Looking forward: sustainable high female voter turnout***

12. Though women's participation in previous elections (where they existed) was considered weak, the clear message from the recent elections in all three countries is that women are interested in participating equally with men as voters. Their participation is impeded by structural factors, such as the lack of voter registration cards in Egypt, and lack of awareness regarding electoral processes, as in Libya. In the former case, attention to improved registration tools continue to be necessary, as well as ensuring inclusive registration processes. In the latter case, voter outreach and education efforts targeted at women are clearly essential to ensuring they are able to effectively exercise their right to vote. Developing capacity of civil society organizations to effectively deliver voter education programs is critical to on-going electoral knowledge development across stakeholder groups and is on-going to build longer term awareness and knowledge regarding women's effective democratic engagement.



## Annex 3e

### Session IV - Gender sensitivity in electoral administration

#### Key issues

- *International good practices – gender policies, how to ensure gender balance in selection of members of electoral management bodies*
- *Gender-sensitive measures and decision-making within the electoral administration*
- *The Egypt, Libya and Tunisia experiences for the first post-revolution parliamentary elections*
- *Other regional and/or international experiences*

#### ***Presentation – “Gender sensitivity in electoral administration: Egypt, Libya and Tunisia (2011/2012 parliamentary elections)”***

#### ***Introduction***

1. Women in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia played a key role in the revolutions as agents of change, both on the front lines as leaders of the demonstrations and behind-the-scenes as political organizers using social media. In fact, some research suggests that women are the vast majority (up to 80% in some countries) of political activists using social media in Arab countries, a product of being restricted from other forms of participation in public life. Yet in the initial phase of the subsequent transitional period, women have been mainly excluded from the highest levels of decision making on the reform processes currently underway; this is particularly true regarding the process of planning, preparing and conducting elections, a key element in the transition.

2. It is an internationally accepted good practice to ensure that the composition of electoral authorities is balanced between men and women. The presence of women at different levels of the electoral administration, including the highest levels, has been recognized as adding credibility to the process, as well as encouraging gender sensitive measures related to planning, preparing and conducting an electoral process.

3. In this light, it is interesting to highlight female presence in the electoral authorities’

structures during the preparation and conduct of the first post-revolution parliamentary elections in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia and to see how the electoral administration affected women participation. The purpose of this presentation is, therefore, to review and encourage discussions of successes and challenges as future parliamentary elections in the three countries are already planned or underway.

#### ***Electoral administration in the three countries: context***

4. During the previous regimes, elections in Egypt and Tunisia were administered by the Ministry of Interior (MoI). In Egypt, the MoI's work was supervised by a higher body but this supervision never enjoyed a high degree of trust: manipulation was a constant characteristic of the process. Thus, one of the first questions regarding post-revolutionary elections was who was to administer the process. In Libya, as there had been no elections for that last four decades, there was no electoral authority in place, and a new institution had to be created. In Egypt and Tunisia, which shared a common mistrust of MoI administration of elections, different solutions were found.

#### ***Women representation in the new electoral administration***

5. Following the demise of the previous regime in Egypt, the MoI's participation was maintained, but new (and completely judicial) supervisory structures were created for the new elections (the High Electoral Commission, HEC; and the Presidential Electoral Commission, PEC). These instances were integrated by the most senior heads of different courts, which resulted in electoral commissions where there was no women or youth representation at its highest levels (none of the members of the HEC or PEC were women).

6. In Tunisia, an entirely new independent electoral commission was created, and its members were chosen from independent candidates proposed by different "corporate" groups and civil society organizations – nevertheless, women's participation in the commission was not very strong: only two out of the 16 members were women (including its vice-president) even though the decree-law establishing the body explicitly stated that the principle of parity should be upheld when selecting the members.

7. In Libya, the transitional authorities agreed that an independent body would administer the first open election in 60 years, as had been the case in Tunisia. Initially supposed to be a commission of 17 members (of which two were women), the HNEC was eventually reduced to 11. Neither of the two women remained in the post and neither of them was replaced; throughout most of the electoral process, there were no women on the Commission. Not only did this mean that the senior decision-making structures did not include a women, but it

also meant that the public face of the HNEC was exclusively male, which resulted in a missed opportunity for women to be seen taking high profile leadership roles at a time of much visibility.

8. Overall, then, the situation characterizing the administration of the first parliamentary elections in the three countries after their revolutions was that of either very weak or no representation at all of women at the highest levels of the electoral authorities. This despite the surge in civic participation during and immediately after 2011 revolutions, and the corresponding boost in the visibility of women as active participants in the political space.

9. There was little to no meaningful female representation within middle-level management of electoral administration, either. Women were extremely scarce in the group of middle-level electoral administrators in Egypt (the secretariats of the HEC and PEC, the MoI, the MSAD, and any of the other state agencies involved in the administration of the elections). The most prominent exception was the presence of a female judge within the General Secretariat of the PEC. In Tunisia, apart from a small number of female professionals seconded from other institutions, there was no representation at the middle management level of the ISIE either, which was also generally weak as the ISIE never established a technical/operational secretariat as such. In Libya, none of the heads of the HNEC secretariat were women. Similarly, there were no women heading the electoral regional offices in any of the countries. In Tunisia, women represented 16% and 11% of the membership of the electoral authority's regional and local councils.

### ***Women representation at polling station level***

10. It was only amongst polling-level staff that women were represented, mostly because the staff members were recruited from the educational sector where women have a strong presence. Even then, there were not many polling-center managers who were women (in Egypt, 10% of all polling station managers, all judges, were women).

11. In Tunisia, women were represented mostly at the polling station level, because the staff was recruited from the educational sector where women have strong presence, as in Egypt, and because unemployed graduates were targeted in the recruitment, a group which includes a large number of women. The European Union Electoral Observation Mission reports that out of the polling staff seen in the 1,649 polling stations visited in Tunisia, 27% were women. It stands to reason that an even smaller proportion of women were polling-center managers in Tunisia.

12. In Libya, women were managers at 51% of overall polling (again, largely due to the

extensive use of educational facilities and teachers). In Libya, women were well represented amongst polling staff, local observer teams and accredited media covering the elections. Segregated polling stations were well appreciated by women, and enabled a sense of safety while also preventing men from overtly instructing women on decision-making at the place of polling. Women polling staff were well recognized by both observers and voters as professional, taking great care in discharging their duties. Notable were the number of elderly women voting. Observers articulated very few significant concerns, a remarkable achievement for the country's first elections in nearly five decades.

13. It is interesting to note that, in Libya, some women's voter registration and polling centers faced difficulties in identifying women staff members due mainly to the reluctance of the local community to allow women to perform the registration and polling task for extended periods of time (or at all). The phenomenon, documented for instance in al Khoms district in Libya, impacted the number of women who registered to vote and the final turnout of women. Al Khoms, a largely rural and conservative area, was unsurprisingly the district with the lowest female registration figures (37% compared to 45% nationwide). In some areas in Libya (e.g. Gharyan district), local leaders insisted that the polling stations should not only be segregated but also that registration and polling had to take place in completely different buildings. Such local sensitivities were generally accommodated in spite of the additional administrative/logistics burdens they implied.

### ***Gender sensitivity in electoral administration***

14. The lack of female presence in the electoral management bodies did not result in a complete absence of substantive gender measures, although much work remains to be done in that respect. In Egypt, special efforts (from an initiative of UN agencies) were made to promote the issuance of national ID cards to allow women to vote. In Tunisia, special efforts were made to reach out to women voters and the electoral authorities tried to engage specifically with women's organizations on issues of concern to women. This was abandoned following a weak response on the part of civil society. In Libya, the HNEC was extremely active in trying to motivate women to register; this included clarifying that the Libyan 'Family Book' form of identification could be accessed by each voting-eligible member of the family, enabling them to register and vote independently (and not as a family, as the ID might have suggested).

15. In Egypt and Libya, there were special polling stations for women (and in Libya, special voter registration centers for women). It is generally felt that having women-specific polling stations encouraged female turnout, particularly in rural and conservative areas. It is of note that the decision to have women-specific stations was initially rejected by the members of HNEC in Libya, but advocated by the two women commissioners when they were still members. Again in Libya, it was witnessed that veiled women were mostly asked to lift face veils for identification checks by female polling staff and that this was accepted without

any problem; nevertheless, it was also observed that, on some occasions, female polling staff did not ask to see women's faces. In Egypt, measures were taken to identify veiled women voters by ensuring that women polling staff were present at most polling stations to carry out this procedure rather than a male judge.

16. In Tunisia, and particularly in Libya, the electoral management bodies took steps to pro-actively advise political parties/entities in terms of the registration of candidate lists, to ensure that the "parity" clause was complied with.

### ***Final considerations***

17. To sum up, there was very weak presence of women in the electoral authorities at all levels, excepting the polling staff. This situation, which goes against international good practice, could be addressed in the discussions currently on-going regarding the legal framework for the new electoral authorities in the three countries. The decision in Egypt to maintain a strictly judiciary composition of the electoral management body, complemented with the hierarchical nature of the composition (senior judges), does not bode well for women's representation within the EMB.

18. In Tunisia, on-going discussions regarding the composition of the new electoral body have not yet seriously addressed the issue of women's representation (the theme was raised at the corresponding commissions of the Constituent Assembly but was refused by the majority). In Libya, it seems that the conservative nature of society is still a great obstacle to substantive presence of women in public office, including electoral management bodies, and in numbers that represent anything close to a critical mass necessary to have real influence. But efforts should be maintained, and particularly in the middle levels of the administration, and as polling station managers.

19. Efforts should also be strengthened to ensure electoral administrations are gender-sensitive. In this regard, international experience shows that establishing a gender unit within the electoral management bodies, as well as training electoral administrators on gender and elections, could be helpful in mainstreaming gender sensitivity in the electoral administrations of the three countries.

## Annex 3f

### Session V: Role of civil society in promoting women's participation

#### Key issues

- *Role of civil society in general and women's organizations in particular in supporting the electoral process*
- *Civil society and civic education and awareness: challenges and opportunities in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia*
- *Women organizations and electoral observation: challenges and opportunities in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia*
- *Other regional and international experiences*

**Presentation: “Women's organizations engagement in support of the electoral process in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia”**

#### Introduction

1. Elections are more than just political and administrative/operational processes; they are also important social events. This is why the range of electoral stakeholders is so great, as is the nature and scope of their participation in the process. Civil society organizations in particular, play an important part in the process through building trust in the process, increasing plurality in civic dialogue and raising awareness of important issues. Women's participation in the work of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) is itself a measure of women's political participation in public space and in society more generally. Such involvement can be a potent force for social change, and is particularly important during political transitions.

2. In Egypt, Libya and Tunisia, women's organizations have limited resources and autonomy, particularly compared with groups that are already well established and consequently better positioned to help shape dialogue and decision-making. Women are therefore struggling to take their due place amongst transitional decision-makers. The current democratization process has the potential to elevate their concerns and participation to unprecedented levels or, alternatively, to see them marginalized and sidelined. Women's groups are expected to establish strong movements to ensure women's full participation throughout the transition.

3. In terms of elections, women's NGOs can be very effective in supporting the process as promoters of voter information and education, as active participants in electoral observation, and by mobilizing and supporting women political aspirants. In Egypt, Libya and Tunisia, women (both individually and through civil society organizations) were instrumental in the regime change and their participation remained high during the initial stages of the transition, including the preparation and conduct of the first post-revolutionary elections. The purpose of this presentation is to review how women's presence in civil society supported the first

parliamentary elections following the revolutions in the three countries.

***Examples of women's NGOs work on voter education and information in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia***

4. In Egypt, women's groups have played a key role during the transition by supporting increased political and electoral participation of women. Involvement with NGOs has allowed women the opportunity to gain visibility and help mitigate barriers to their political participation. Prominent women NGOs in Egypt include: the Arab Alliance for Women (AAW); and the Egyptian Feminist Union (EFU); Association for the Development and Enhancement of Women (ADEW); Egyptian Center for Women's Rights (ECWR); Appropriate Communication Techniques (ACT); *Nazra* for Feminist Studies and the Center for Egyptian Women's Legal Assistance (CEWLA); the New Women Foundation (NWF), Advancement of Egyptian Women (ADEW); CEWLA as well as *al-Mashreq* and the Association of Female Lawyers; and women's movement *Baheya ya Masr*

5. Several women's NGOs in Egypt have formed broad coalitions and implemented wide-reaching campaigns calling greater social, economic and political rights for women. The AAW men convened a nation-wide consultative process that included 30,000 participants and 500,000 signatures, which resulted in the announcement of a National Charter. The EFU, a coalition composed of 500 NGOs, ensured wide dissemination of the charter, and has played an active role in reaching out to over 5 million Egyptian women, with an ambitious plan to reach out to more women and men. ACT established a Women's Parliament with more than 1,000 members from youth groups and civil society, which came out with 10 statements signed by more than 500 NGOs and movements. Finally, *Baheya Ya Masr*, a youth movement, launched *Baheya ya Masr* conducted field visits in impoverished areas of Cairo to improve women's awareness on their constitutional rights, garnering broad media coverage. Efforts are meant to advise the Constituent Assembly of one hundred members (seven of which are women) to include articles that address equal rights for men and women.

6. Several women's groups in Egypt mounted programs directly focusing on elections. *Nazra* ran a Women's Political Participation Academy Program, launched in October 2011, which mentored women candidates for the last round of the People's Assembly elections. Earlier this year, a report was released, "She and Elections", based on its observations of the electoral process and the experience of several women candidates, which presented the interesting conclusion that the idea of having a women's quota was not supported by women candidates. The ECWR monitored women's political participation, raised awareness about misconceptions surrounding women's participation, and sought international mechanisms and advocating for strengthening the political weaknesses identified in order to increase women's participation as informed voters, voting for leaders that represent their best interests. Finally, the Association of Egyptian Female Lawyers worked on raising the awareness of women in rural areas in Egypt prior to the Parliamentary Elections of 2011-2012. The NGO trained 40 female lawyers who in turn conducted awareness sessions among a total of 18,000 individuals. Other examples exist of initiatives undertaken by women's NGOs in this sector.

7. In Tunisia, women organizations were part of the larger civil society efforts that aimed to encourage Tunisians to register and vote. One regional women organization, Women's



Voice in Jammal, coordinated with the regional electoral management body, IRIE, to canvass and register women workers in factories and remote areas who otherwise would not have an easy access, and willingness, to registration offices. Another organization, League of Women Voters, was also active in encouraging women to register in a couple of regional locations. However, such initiatives were regional in nature, and only covered a few of the electoral districts.

8. The most comprehensive women voter education, however, came from the General Union of Tunisian Workers (UGTT), which though not a women's organization, managed to target women workers in all Tunisian districts. This campaign is important as the UGTT has a few hundred thousand members all across Tunisia. The campaign's limitation was that all activities, whether regional or national, only targeted women workers and no specific attention was given to housewives. Furthermore, the civil society voter education activities were minimal and uncoordinated compared to what could have been done, and most of the attention was geared to addressing later stages of the electoral processes such as candidate registration and polling day activities.

9. In Libya, many women's groups were active in engaging women voters and candidates on their participation in the July 2012 polls, creating limited space within the public sphere for dialogue on women's roles. For example, the Committee to Support Women's Participation in Decision Making helped raise awareness of the importance of women's participation in the political process at all levels, whether as voters or candidates. In total, 220 women candidates benefited from exposure to comparative experiences shared by visiting women parliamentarians. Universities and youth groups were also active in reaching out to women. Train-the-trainer workshops were conducted within the University of Benghazi, for instance, to prepare young men and women to start their own awareness campaigns.

***Examples of women's NGOs work as electoral observers (or women's participation in electoral observation throughout the process)***

10. Women's NGOs or NGOS that benefit from very active participation of women were highly mobilized in order to observe the elections, and women were nominated by political parties/entities to be their agents in polling stations. In Libya, the electoral commission's district office in Tripoli, which accredited the highest number of electoral observers and political entity agents country-wide, reported 910 women observers (out of 2,808), 228 political entity women agents (out of 1,112), 119 individual candidate women agents (out of 1,422) and 36 women media representatives (out of 373). These figures illustrate the unexpectedly high level of involvement of women in observing the electoral process.

11. Civil society organizations and political parties in Tunisia were very active in training local observers. A couple of women's NGOs organized specific women-observer training, but it is also notable that the participation of women in observer groups was quite visible as one third of all observers were women observers, more in civil society groups than political parties. The leading organization in training women observers was the League of Women Voters, which was one of the first organizations to be accredited as a local observer groups.

12. Finally, limited observation missions were carried out to monitor the polls from a gendered perspective. Monitoring concentrated equally all aspects of elections and covered issues such as the presence of women in the media, the presence of observer women, and women's presence in polling station. This experience was piloted in Tunisia by the Tunisian Association of Democrat Women, the Tunisian League of Human Rights and the Association of Tunisian Women for Research and Development. In Libya, a joint effort between the Libyan Forum for Civil Society, the Libyan Women's Union and international organization Gender Concerns International deployed 15 teams to eight areas of the country.

### ***Other support roles played by women's NGOs***

13. Women in civil society also played a number of important roles in supporting the electoral process, such as policy advocacy and training in different areas. Libya has a number of examples, despite the fact that civil society is starting afresh following the revolution. There was, under the previous regime, no space for civil society; since 2011 there has been significant growth in women-led civil society organizations that have largely focused on the promotion of women's political rights. Women's organizations led the effort to encourage women to register and to vote as well as to become candidates. Women's groups were supplied with civic education materials, and undertook grassroots education, often going to schools and door-to-door in order to overcome cultural restrictions limiting women's mobility and accessibility to public spaces. The *Sawti Laha* (My Voice for Her) campaign by women's organizations, supported by UNDP, encouraged all voters to support women candidates. Over 500 participants as well as all the major government leadership attended the national conference of *Sawti Laha*. Such events garnered positive media attention and constituted a watershed moment for Libyan women, who were able to articulate their aspirations for public life for the first time in Libya.

14. Women's groups in Libya were instrumental in conducting a number of activities to support women candidates including campaign skills workshops for women candidates, sharing comparative experiences via forums. Resources were shared and networking encouraged. Women's organizations mobilized to help overcome the extra obstacles faced by women candidates. These collective civil society efforts have earned much acclaim across the country. In the absence of national gender machinery (a ministry or similar), as well as public institutions in transition, civil society organizations have filled a void in this respect.

15. As mentioned, Tunisia required "parity" in all voter lists formulated across electoral districts. A women's organization, "Equality and Parity", compiled a list of a 1,000 potential women candidates and made it available to political parties to help them identify potential women candidates, which was a challenge in some of the districts. Furthermore, this NGO organized training for women candidates on communication skills and political issues, and met with political party leaders to encourage them to place women candidates atop their party lists. Many other organizations also facilitated town-hall meetings with women candidates.

16. It is interesting to note that a significant proportion of the activities targeting women

participation in the three countries did not come from women's groups. Prominent civil organizations in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia were engaged on different levels in encouraging women participation. In Tunisia, for example, UGTT organized a media exposure activity for all women candidates who are head of lists; another organization produced a couple of well-prepared TV spots to encourage women's participation in elections.

## Conclusions

17. In the three countries, civil society proved to be active and responsive to the needs of women in this unique period, mobilizing behind women who sought to become active participants in the electoral processes. Their value laid particularly in distributing information to their communities, creating space for dialogue between members and monitoring the process. There remains much that can be done, however. Regional networks and alliances should be built to support the gender dimension in democratization agendas. Other possible roles that women's NGOs could play include research studies and documentation to better identify and assess the impediments and challenges for women. NGOs could also engage and mobilize women voters, particularly marginalized women, to help them overcome impediments to participation. Women's civil society groups can institute mechanisms to promote national commitments to gender equality through democratization and election-related activities. Another key role is forming networks/alliances that connect women around issues of relevance to large numbers of women. NGOs can also develop the capacity of elected women and help build their leadership skills.

## Case Studies

• <b>Presentation 1</b> .....	<b>135</b>
<i>Neel Kantha Uprety</i>	
<i>Former Chief Election Commissioner of Nepal</i>	
• <b>Presentation 2</b> .....	<b>145</b>
<i>Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne - UK</i>	
<i>EU Parliament and European Council Parliament</i>	
• <b>Presentation 3</b> .....	<b>148</b>
<i>Ilham Abdel Wahab</i>	
<i>Supreme Commission for Elections and Referendum (SCER)</i>	
<i>Chairman's Office Women Affairs General Department - Yemen</i>	
• <b>Presentation 4</b> .....	<b>152</b>
<i>Thoko Mpumlwana</i>	
<i>Omission for Gender Equality - South Africa</i>	
• <b>Presentation 5</b> .....	<b>157</b>
<i>Dr. Nemata Majeks-Walker</i>	
<i>Founder and First President of The 50/50 Group of Sierra Leone</i>	



## Presentations -1

### Electoral Systems for Enhancing Representation of Women and specified groups

**Neel Kantha Uprety**

*Former Chief Election Commissioner of Nepal*

*upretyneil@hotmail.com*

### Experience of Nepal in the CAE -2008

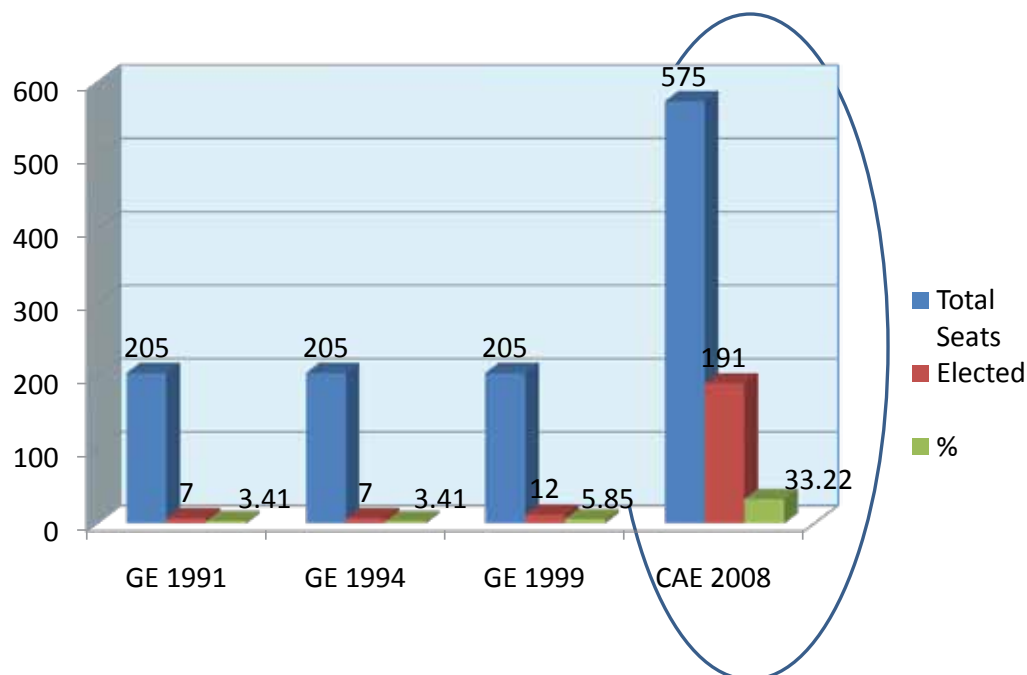
- **A Parallel Mixed System**

- FPTP-240 Seats (41.74%)
- List PR-335 Seats (58.26%)

- **Special Features**

- Flexible Close list of Candidates in PR race
- Proportionality for party in the PR side only
- Inclusiveness (Women and other specified groups based on quota)
- Women's Representation in the CA 33.2 %

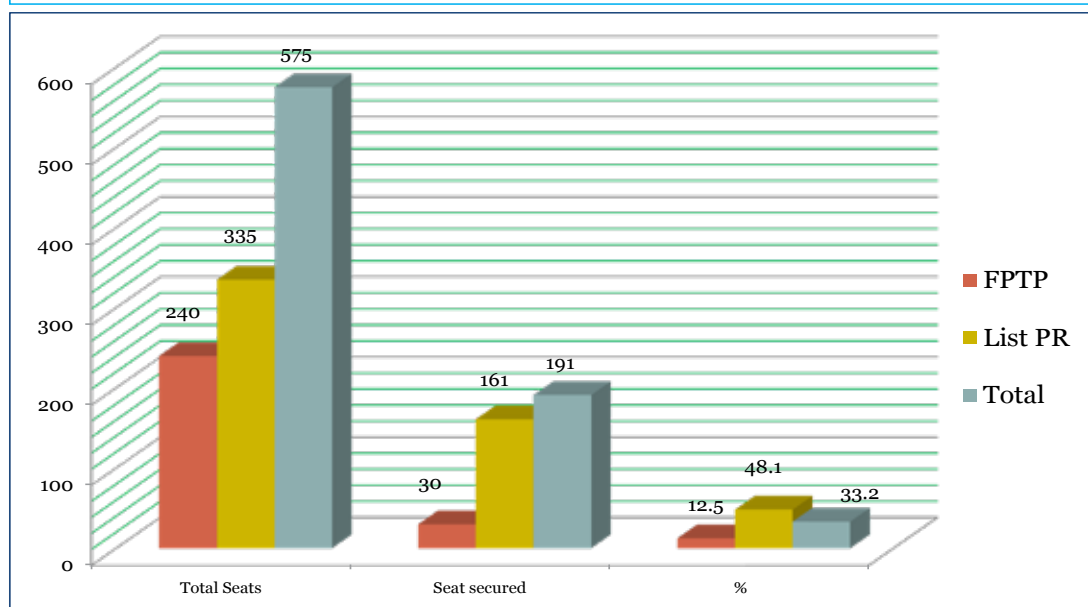
#### ***Women's Representation in the past four Elections***



## Quota in the electoral System Nepalese experience (PR Race)

- Dalit 13.0%
- Indigenous caste ( Janajati) 37.8%
- Madheshi 31.2%
- Backward Region 4.0%
- Others 30.2% and
- Women 50% from each of the specified groups

### Women representation from CAE -2008



5

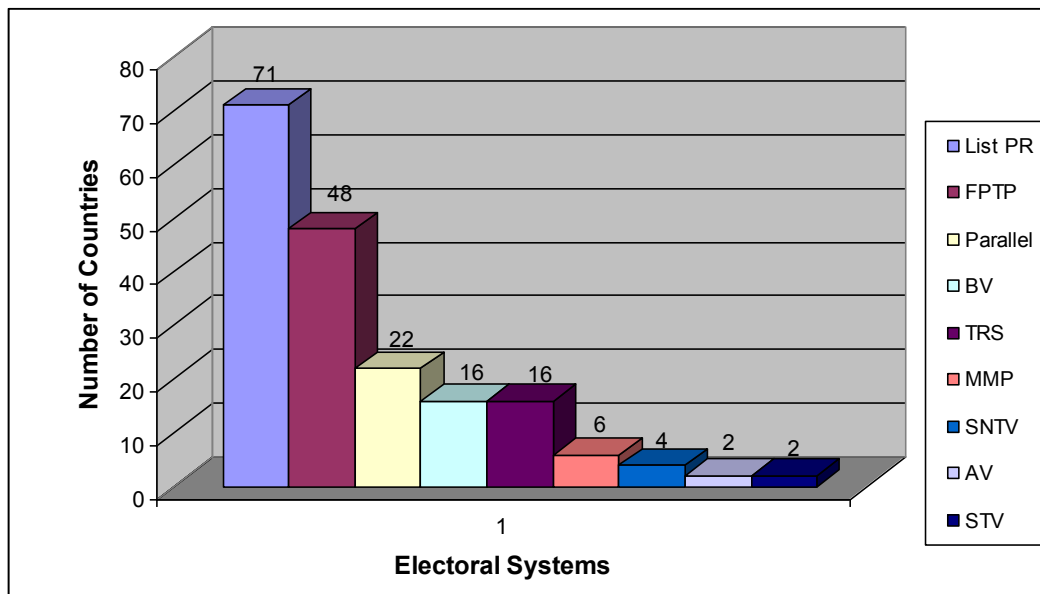


## Quota under FPTP System

Rotating reserve seat system in SMC

- Two votes system in MMC
- Single vote for combined candidacy in SMC
- Equal number of candidacy for women and men in SMC

## *Countries Using Electoral Systems*



7

## Features of Proposed Electoral System

- Proportionality
- Inclusiveness of specified group (women)
- Geographic Representation
- Positive Discrimination policy for supporting to specific groups and geography
- Economical
- Easy to implement
- Acceptable to political parties and the people

## Electoral Systems : Example from Nepal CAE Result of 2008

### Mixed Members Proportional Representation(MMPR)

S.No	Parties	Received Votes	Members from List PR with compansation (A)		Result from FPTP (B)		Compensation for List PR (A-B)
			Percent	Seats	Seats	percent	Seats
1	Nepal Communist Party (Maoist)	3,144,204	30.03	173	120	50.0	53
2	Nepali Congress	2,269,883	21.68	125	37	15.4	88
3	Nepal Communist Party (UML)	2,183,370	20.85	120	33	13.8	87
4	Madheshi Peoples Right Forum	678,327	6.48	37	30	12.5	7
5	Terai Madhesh Democratic Party	338,930	3.24	19	9	3.8	10
6	Rastriya Prajatantra Parry	263,431	2.52	14	0	0.0	14
7	Nepal Communist Party ( ML)	243,545	2.33	13	0	0.0	13
8	Sadbhawana Party	167,517	1.60	9	4	1.7	5
9	Janamorcha Nepal	164,381	1.57	9	2	0.8	7
10	All other Party *	1,018,042	9.72	56	5	2.1	51
	Total	10,471,630	100	575	240	100	335
* In all other party additional 22 Parties would have gotten representation into CA if it were MMP system							
adoNepal had adopted for CAE							

## List –PR System

- Fully proportional in representation
- Simple to voters to exercise
- Easy to political parties to internalize and practice.
- Convenient to managers to administer and implement
- Inclusiveness and positive discrimination possible
- Can be implemented in multimember constituencies
- Geographic representation can be ensured
- Votes carry equal value, but
- Threshold can be fixed
- Less expensive and competitive to individual
- Political party Oriented system

### *Construction of List for PR System*

Legal		Legal		Illegal	
Position on list	Gender	Position on list	Gender	Position on list	Gender
1	Male	1	Female	1	Male
2	Female	2	Female	2	Female
3	Male	3	Male	3	Male
4	Female	4	Male	4	Male
5	Male	5	Male	5	Female

## *Quota in mixed electoral system (an example of 50:50 male female ratio)*

<i>Race</i>	<i>Total Seats won</i>	<i>Seats for Women</i>
<i>FPTP</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>List PR</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>13</i>

*A party wins 10 FPTP seats and 16 List PR seats. To get fifty per cent women in that party there need to be 13 women elected out of the total of 26 seats. In FPTP only three women were elected which means that ten out of the sixteen List PR seats have to be filled by women.*

## *A zipped List in PR race*

<b>Position</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Gender</b>
1	Male	9	Male	<del>17</del>	<del>Male</del>	<del>25</del>	<del>Male</del>
2	Female	10	Female	18	Female	26	Female
3	Male	11	Male	<del>19</del>	<del>Male</del>	<del>27</del>	<del>Male</del>
4	Female	12	Female	20	Female	28	Female
5	Male	<del>13</del>	<del>Male</del>	<del>21</del>	<del>Male</del>	<del>29</del>	<del>Male</del>
6	Female	14	Female	22	Femal	30	Female
7	Male	<del>15</del>	<del>Male</del>	<del>23</del>	<del>Male</del>	<del>31</del>	<del>Male</del>
8	Female	16	Female	24	Female	32	Female

## List –PR in Multimember Constituencies

### An Example

- Nine Multimember Constituencies
- Seats allocated in proportion to Population and geography
- Total 200 Legislature seats based on estimated population of 26 million

### Disadvantage

- Disproportionality in representation between big and small parties due to wastage of votes of smaller

## *List –PR in Multimember Constituencies*

List PR Electoral System under Multimember Constituency			
An Example of Proportional Representation system			
Electoral Constituency	Population Estimation	Percentage of Popn.	Allocated seats to Legislature
1	3,838,958	14.77	29
2	2,163,155	8.32	17
3	2,871,643	11.04	22
4	3,378,681	12.99	26
5	2,769,596	10.65	21
6	2,837,799	10.91	22
7	3,116,194	11.99	24
8	3,086,074	11.87	24
9	1,937,901	7.45	15
Total	26,000,000	100.00	200

## Improved List PR- in MM Constituencies

### A Two Tiers Seats Distribution System

List PR Electoral System under Multimember Constituency				
An Example of Proportional Representation system				
Electoral Constituency	Population Estimation	Percentage of Popn.	Allocated seats to Legislature (80%)	Seats allocated for National Aggresgate votes (20%)
1	3,838,958	14.77	23	6
2	2,163,155	8.32	13	3
3	2,871,643	11.04	18	4
4	3,378,681	12.99	21	5
5	2,769,596	10.65	17	4
6	2,837,799	10.91	17	4
7	3,116,194	11.99	19	5
8	3,086,074	11.87	19	5
9	1,937,901	7.45	12	3
Total	26,000,000	100.00	160	40

# Comparisons between three most popular electoral systems

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Parallel system</i>	<i>MMPR</i>	<i>List PR in MMC with compensation</i>
<i>Create representative parliaments in terms of parties</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Very high</i>	<i>Very high</i>
<i>Create representative parliaments in terms of other dimensions of representation</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>High</i>
<i>Support accountability</i>	<i>High (minus)</i>	<i>High (minus)</i>	<i>Very high (minus)</i>
<i>Inclusiveness</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Very High</i>
<i>Create stable governments</i>	<i>Neutral (plus)</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Neutral</i>
<i>Give equal weight to each voter</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Very high</i>	<i>Very high</i>
<i>Few wasted voted</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Very high</i>	<i>Very high</i>
<i>Resist tactical voting behaviour</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>High</i>
<i>Be simple for the voters</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Very High</i>
<i>Be simple for parties</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Neutral</i>
<i>Be simple for the election administration</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>High</i>
<i>Be generally accepted by the parties and the public</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Very High</i>	<i>Very High</i>
<i>The importance of the constituency delimitation</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Very high (minus)</i>	<i>Very High</i>
<i>Secure a broad geographical representation</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>High (plus)</i>
<i>Equal status of all representatives</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Very high</i>
<i>Promote reconciliation among groups in conflict</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Very high</i>	<i>Very high</i>
<i>Promote cross-community parties</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>High</i>
<i>Be sustainable</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Very high</i>	<i>Very high</i>

## **What must not be forgotten**

***ES does not resolve all problems however it should:***

- Support multiparty democracy
- Easier for Participation and management
- Transparency maintained
- Voters know who they are voting for and why voting for.
- Supportive to addressing political, social, ethnic and issues of deprived section of society

**End of Presentation**



## Presentations - 2

### Women's participation in post revolutionary parliamentary elections

#### *Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne - UK*

*EU Parliament and European Council Parliament*



Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne, Member of the House of Lords, UK, EU and Council of Europe Parliaments, shared her considerable knowledge and experience of more than two decades as a woman candidate, which started in the House of Commons, with a constituency of 80,000 persons, of whom the core block consisted of farmers.

- Twice, a Member of the European Parliament, (representing over 10 million voters from 27 national parliaments, each with different complexities and sensitivities).
- Member of Parliament of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg,
- Is appointment for life by Queen Elizabeth II to the House of Lords, U.K.

In the Parliament of the European Council, the work is based on adherence to the international UN Human Rights instruments and on the principles of equal rights for both men and women.

#### **Elections Observed:**

- Afghanistan
- Armenia (Head of delegation)
- Azerbaijan
- Iraq (Twice)
- Kazakhstan
- Kenya
- Lebanon (Twice)
- Moldova
- Pakistan
- Palestine
- Russia
- Yemen (Chief Observer, twice)
- Zambia





The Baroness met eminent women politicians and leaders, who are role models to others.



Most important consideration is the enforcement of the rule of law. Since laws are made in parliament, the presence of women in parliament is essential, as laws made by only half the population will seldom be good laws.





The Baroness' responsibilities as parliamentarian, includes: observing and monitoring elections in various parts of the world in Asia, Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

Elected women need to be empowered to become decision makers, through long-term capacity building, strategic planning, economic empowerment and legal support.

Her advice to women candidates:

- Reaching out to others, both men and women
- Giving and receiving assistance
- Engaging in politics as a group in order to maximize the chances of success.



**EXTRACTS FROM THE PHOTOS SHOWN IN THE PRESENTATION BY:**  
Baroness Emma Nicholson of Winterbourne



## Presentation -3

### Some programs on Women Participation as Voters in the Presidential Elections 2012 - Yemen

**Ilham Abdel Wahab**

*Supreme Commission for Elections and Referendum (SCER)*

*Chairman's Office Women Affairs General Department*

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In the framework of enhancing and supporting political participation of women in the early presidential elections that took place on February 21, 2012, with the objective of increasing the numbers of women voters, SCER, in cooperation with the electoral support project represented by UNDP and EU, has funded an Integrated Operational Plan for the SCER Women's General Department, which included the following activities:

#### Introduction:

1. Field visits to seven Governorates (San'aa, Amanat, Adan, Lahij, Al Mahwit, Ta'izz, Socotra ( in Hadramout) to train Secondary school female students about their electoral rights and to form student working groups for electoral awareness in their schools, and to increase the awareness of illiteracy classes women of the importance of participation in the presidential elections 2012 and going to polling stations. Women's Affairs General Department
2. Implementing an intensive training course for 36 female staff from SCER headquarters and governorate branches on women political participation, Electoral management concept, national laws system and international pacts and conventions on women political rights. This is considered the first training course targeting SCER female staff.
3. Implementing a raining course for Women's affairs Department staff and some SCER staff participating in the field training and awareness in the seven targeted governorates on different electoral concepts of the electoral process, and the early presidential elections polling mechanism in addition to training them on using training and awareness tools.
4. Holding a consultation meeting with political parties women leaders for exchanging experiences and identifying their roles in the political parties, and in the Women's Affairs General Department towards enhancing a wider and tangible participation of Yemeni women in the early presidential elections of 2012 and discussing the creation of a strong and effective networking among them during the coming period for participating in increasing women membership in elected councils to 30%. Yemeni Women Federation also participated in holding a workshop for supporting the quotas system within the framework of the Electoral Support Program.

**Our programs also included support activities that helped in enhancing our objectives and work directions and have achieved field positive results including:**

Participation of Women General Department in the awareness seminars on activating the role

of preachers and female religious coordinators in supporting political participation of women and their role in the early presidential elections of February 21, 2012 implemented at the Amanat Al Asima and Adan targeting in Amanat (Sana'a, Amanat, Amran, Sa'dah, Al Jawf, Ma'rib) and in Adan (Aden, Lahj, Abyan, Ad Dali', Ta'azz).

.....

- Participation in training voluntary teams in the electoral awareness campaign in collaboration with the SCER media and electoral education sector to motivate women to exercise their electoral right as voters.
- Contributing in training the principal presidential elections committee, through coverage of women's political participation part, and how to facilitate the difficulties faced by women during voting, in addition to distributing publications on the participating committees.
- Providing some cultural forums and civil society organizations and some universities with quantities of diverse media and awareness products for distribution and dissemination.
- In cooperation with SCER, implementation of media and cultural programs by a number of civil society organizations among illiterate women to inform them of the importance of issuing personal ID cards to participate in elections.



Part of training workshop proceedings for religious female coordinators and mosques preachers

Within the framework of the Women Sports Festival, and in coordination with the Ministry of Youth and Sports, a special stand for SCER Women General Department was opened in the Bilqis club through which awareness seminars and competitions were implemented, as well as distribution of posters and awareness guidelines Women General Department publications on the festival women visitors. The stand was visited by the Prime Minister, Mr. Mohammed Salem Basendwah, accompanied by five ministers. At the conclusion of the festival the Women General Department was honoured by the Minister of Youth and Sports. The stand had media coverage in several local channels (Yemen, Yemen today, Al Aqeeq, Azal).

A special wing for the Women General Department was opened at the Movenpick Hotel Media Centre, through which the department's activities, media and Educational publications were showcased. In addition to providing journalists, the media and those concerned with posters and guidelines. The stand was visited by several local and foreign dignitaries, including a British Baroness who was on an observation mission to the presidential elections 2012.

## Success Indicators

1. Holding of the first training and awareness workshop for all SCER women staff to inform them of their political and electoral rights was an icebreaker to fear and hesitation of many of them in protecting and defending their rights.
2. Producing a tremendous amount of awareness materials and tools such as school bags / shawls/head covers/hats/pens/baskets/T-shirts/ school copybooks/stands/moppies, in addition to electoral guidelines simulating female university student, and literacy classes women students, in a record time. We were able to distribute them according to the set plan and even surpassed it.
3. The archipelago of Socotra local council and School Directorate were able to issue ID cards in a record time - within one day – to 29 secondary female students, to be able to participate in the elections, after the Women General Department had implemented the awareness training course for female students.



**awareness activities for secondary school female students about their political rights**

4. Changing wrong concepts about the importance of early presidential elections...Also the exceptional mechanisms used in these elections led to encouraging a large number of women to vote.
5. The most significant two indicators for the level of success were first unlimited confidence in the SCER Women General Department by the SCER Chairman and members during the implementation of our activities and their participation in inaugurating all our activities. The second indicator was the result of the last statistics of monitoring the participation of women in elections, which exceeded two and a half million of a total of around 6 million.

## Most Significant Challenges

- The short time to prepare training, media and educational materials made the women staff at the Women General Department exert double effort through putting in extra working hours, which helped in preparing most of them.
- Due to that, we were unable to train a consultation team, receive complaints, and had difficulty in providing a hot line. However, the presence of a comprehensive human resource team from the Electoral support Project (gender expert, other media and publication expert, legal advisor, technical, finance experts and administrative staff) as well as unlimited financial support to all our activities and programs represented a major factor in our support and in facilitating the implementation of our programs as well as publishing aware-

ness materials in large quantities.

## Future Challenges

- Developing a comprehensive operational plan with an estimated budget.
- Contributing in developing a strong women network that includes all political groups to work together in the spirit of one team and enhance and support women political and electoral participation.
- Setting a matrix of electoral system scenarios, and specific constitutional and legal provisions that would enable the access of at least 30% of women to elected councils membership.



## Lessons Learnt

- *Lack of time did not enable us and the project team to publish the press release (Tamkeen) at the required time.*
- *Had we more time, we would have been able to provide a hot line and receive complaints, reports and women voters inquiries*
- *The media centre provided the opportunity to hold seminars, workshops and dialogue interviews associated with elections.*

## How to Improve Performance

1. *Training a legal – technical consultation team to reply to inquiries, and providing the requirements need by that team to reply to queries through the hotline.*
2. *Providing the women General Department with media and press specialists to be able to publish the press release (Tamkeen).*
3. *All current staff need specialized training courses to qualify them to undertake their functions.*
4. *The Department needs cadres specialized in women and gender issues.*

## End of Presentation

## Presentation-4



### Women in post-revolutionary parliamentary elections by:

**Thoko Mpumlwana:** *Ommision for Gender Equality - South Africa*

### Towards achieving Gender Equality in Elections: Gender sensitivity in Electoral Administration: South Africa

#### Format of Presentation

1. Introduction
2. Context
3. Background
4. Electoral Administration in South Africa
5. Legislative Framework
6. Place of Women in Electoral Administration
7. Recommendations

#### Introduction A: *Commission for Gender Equality*

##### *Constitutional Mandate*

*Commission for Gender Equality and Electoral Commission of South Africa:*

- State institutions established in terms of Chapter 9 of the Constitution of South Africa to, “support and strengthen constitutional democracy”
- Independent, must be impartial, exercise duties without fear, favour or prejudice
- Accountable only to parliament
- No person may interfere with their work

#### Introduction B: *Commission for Gender Equality*

##### ☐ *Constitutional Mandate*

The Commission for Gender Equality must promote respect for gender equality and the protection, development and attainment of gender equality.

##### ☐ *Vision*

Asociety free from all forms of gender oppression and inequality

*Additional Powers and Functions prescribed by Commission for Gender Equality Act 39 of 1996 S11 (1) of the CGE Act 39 of 1996inter alia*

*Monitor ▪ Investigate ▪ Research ▪ Educate/Lobby*



## Introduction C:

- “the pursuit of democracy is inextricably linked to the pursuit of policies, measures and practices that seek to reduce inequalities between men and women in all spheres of life... and its intersection with gender equality nationally and internationally”( Dr Brigalia Bam former Chair of IEC South Africa) .
- OAU Charter says “..freedom and equality and dignity are essential objectives for the achievement of the legitimate aspirations of the African peoples”.
- “ Women’s rights are human rights”

## Context:

- South Africa is a young unitary democratic state : 18 years old
  - Has 9 provinces and 284 municipal councils
  - Statistics indicate population of 50mil :52% of South African citizens are women
  - South Africa a society of diverse races, ethnic, religious groups : United in Diversity
  - Past a divided society where women were minors in law and practices including cultural practices
  - Discrimination in the law (apartheid)
  - Religious, cultural and ethnic intolerance
  - 44% women at national parliament
  - 1994 new democratic order: Nelson Mandela 1<sup>st</sup> voted president.  
Reconciliation and nation building core.
  - South Africa admitted in global family of nations as a sovereign state also bound by international charters and conventions
  - Hopes of all South Africans to belong and be accepted in their diversity high
  - A parliament for big and small parties in the electoral system
  - 1996 Constitution promulgated as supreme law
- *Constitutional Values inter alia:*
- *Non-racialism, non-sexism*
  - *Human rights, dignity and equality*
  - *All laws of the country subservient to the constitution*
  - *National conventions all call for full participation of women in all spheres or sectors of society enjoying all rights and privileges*
  - *Electoral system of South Africa Proportional Representation i.e. political parties determine list of candidates*

## Context: International

- South Africa a signatory to inter alia:
  - *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence against Women (CEDAW)(UN)*
  - *Beijing Platform of Action (UN)*
  - *African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance(AU)*
  - *SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections (SADC)*

- African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (AU)
- Protocol on Women's Rights (AU):
  - *Principles on Election Management, Monitoring and Observation (PEMMO)*

## **Background:**

### ***Electoral Commission of South Africa:***

- Electoral Commission Act 51 of 1996
  - To manage elections for national, provincial and local legislative bodies
  - Ensure elections are free and fair
  - Appoint staff to administer and run elections
  - Ensure all voters of 18 years and above are involved in elections and they vote
  - Ensure climate for election conducive for peaceful voting
- *Commission has five Commissioners : 3 full time and two part time*
- Two women and three males. Chairperson a woman
  - Guided by the spirit and values of the constitution in its operations and approach.
  - Freedoms and rights of expression, assembly and of association
  - Equal treatment for all citizens including women
- *Freedom of the media*

## **A - WHY women?**

- i) Centuries of exclusion in decision making including the vote especially black women*
- ii) Women in majority in South Africa*
- iii) Majority voters are women and 55% plus vote*
- iii) Linkage between development and women participation in society*
- iv) It is fair and just to treat women as full citizens in any society with rights, privileges and responsibilities accorded to all citizens*
- v) The vote is their voice to articulate*

## ***B - How do women participate in elections in South Africa?***

- i) Voters*
- ii) Commissioners*
- iii) Administrators*
- iv) Voting staff*
- v) in NGO's/CSO's doing voter education*
- vi) Candidates*
- v) Observers and political party agents*

## Legislative Framework

- Constitution of South Africa: Bill of Rights
  - *All citizens of voting age to be in the common voter's roll (alphabetically)*
- Electoral Law: special clauses on pregnant women
  - (highly pregnant given special votes or allowed to jump the line at the voting station)*
- Political party lists: no quotas but parties encouraged to ensure women participate
- Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination (PEPUDA)
- Electoral Code of Conduct:
  - i) The right of women candidates to communicate freely with political parties and other candidates
  - ii) Access to all political meetings, marches, rallies, demonstrations, political events etc.,
  - ii) Local government legislation encourages 50% representation in lists
  - iii) Distances to voting stations be a walking distance

### *Legislation promoting women in elections*

- *If distances are far, mobile voting stations used*
- *No crossing of rivers, mountains or busy roads*
- *All election data disaggregated on gender, rural or urban, and age for easy knowledge management*
- *Voting hours to be sensitive to women. Not to close too late for women to walk in dark. This useful in conflict situations*
- *Women journalists protected by Code of Conduct. An offense to intimidate or abuse journalists*
- Prohibited conduct: No party to use violence, intimidation and to discriminate on sex and gender

## Women in Electoral Management Body (IEC)

1. Commissioners
2. Leadership at IEC
3. Core Electoral Staff
4. Voting staff: almost 70% women
5. Presiding Officers: almost 90% women

### *Women in Voter Education*

*Content of voter education sensitive to promoting women*

- Most CSO's led by women
- Curriculum to promote: non-violence, non-sexism and equality
- Encourage peaceful conflict resolution and political tolerance
- Approach: targeted groups women, urban rural

### *Electoral Body oversight on media*

- *WHY? Research reveals that women candidates and role players in election not fairly covered. If covered at all sexist coverage*

- *Designs policies and regulations to ensure protection, visibility and fair coverage of women*
- Work with civil society organizations on implementation of gender equality in the media
- Develop sanctions for propagating sexism or racism and other unconstitutional tendencies

## Recommendations

1. Elections Management bodies should operate independently, impartially and transparently and develop clear policies on advancing participation of women in elections
2. A conducive climate should be a prerequisite for participation of women. Women do not participate if elections are violent and intolerant
3. Women's movement should be strong as a pressure group on elections and democracy
4. Clear policies should be articulated on women and their participation
5. Women MUST proportionally participate in policy making and implementation in the Election Body
6. The law must state clearly the proportion of women to be in the lists as candidates. Leaving it with political parties does not work
7. The EMB should work closely with NGO's that promote women and gender equality
8. Ensure that internally displaced women enjoy their right to participate.
9. Understand impediments to women and the electoral process and design measures to counteract those.
10. Political parties MUST be persuaded to include women in their candidate list where the law is silent on the matter
11. Women must be engaged in all aspects of election administration

## Conclusion

- It is only when election administration adheres to principles of running free, fair and just elections that society may feel that their vote counts and their voices are heard.
- The context within which elections are run differ BUT basic tenets of democratic election processes remain common
- The State stands to lose a lot where the majority feel alienated to democratic processes
- Accept that change of tradition and way of life may be difficult BUT results thereof are immeasurable in returns
- Creation of a new society calls for doing things differently and embracing the value of the other person in a nation.

▫ Acknowledgement: Electoral Commission of South Africa Archives

THANK YOU

## End of Presentation

## Presentation - 5

### How the 50/50 Group provides Election Assistance to Women

Email: [fiftyfiftysl@yahoo.com](mailto:fiftyfiftysl@yahoo.com) . Website: [fiftyfiftysl.com](http://fiftyfiftysl.com)

### Women's participation in post-revolutionary parliamentary elections

Cairo, 9-10 December 2012

by:

**Dr. Nemata Majeks-Walker**

Founder and First President of The50/50 Group of Sierra Leone



## INTRODUCTION :

*Setting the Context About the 50/50 Group of Sierra Leone*

*Rationale for setting the Group up:*

*Representation of women in our elected bodies has been far short of their numbers in the population as a whole. We want to reverse this situation and have announced this in our name the 50/50 Group meaning that we are determined to achieve equal representation with men in all spheres of governance including our council and parliament.*

## MISSION:

*The 50/50 Group of Sierra Leone is a non-Partisan campaign for more women in politics and public life through training and advocacy.*

## VISION:

*-Equality for All*

Ensuring an equal share of political power between men and women in public life within a traditionally male-dominated political system.

## **AIM:**

To change public perception of women in politics and encourage and empower women through training and advocacy to seek and achieve public office and participate in politics and public life.

## **Objectives:**

- To advocate that barriers against women going into politics be removed.
- To change people's perception of women and increase women's participation in democratic politics and other decision making bodies.
- To provide advice and encouragement that will enable women to participate in politics without fear.
- To lobby for the Zipper system of representation in politics-i.e. -one man one woman.
- To sensitize women about the importance of standing for parliament and local council and make a difference in the lives of Sierra Leoneans.
- To develop and maintain a directory of professional women in Sierra Leone
- To reduce women's marginalisation and make their candidature attractive to all political parties and voters.

## **How & Where Did We Start?**

- Made a dramatic statement of our intention to take our rightful place in the government of our country.
- Took over Parliament in a symbolic way on the 30th November 2001 by launching the 50/50 Group in the hall of parliament and later staging a mock parliament session in the well of the house itself -a dramatic statement of our intention to take our rightful place in the governance of our country.
- Held the first mock female Parliament in the House of Parliament, including a female president presiding over a state opening of Parliament.

## **Election Assistance to Women**

The 50/50 Group engenders the electoral process and builds the capacity of women to play a greater role in political life as candidates for office, political leaders, voters and electoral administrators through the following activities.

## **STAGES IN OUR Election Assistance PROGRAMME**

1. Engendering the Registration Process
2. We Use the Media as a Partner
3. Advocacy Campaign
4. Production of a Women's Manifesto
5. Publication of Training Manuals for use by trainers and trainees in the run up to all General and Local elections.
6. Training Potential Female Aspirants
7. Training Nominated Female Candidates

8. Building the capacity of all elected women for effective representation at all levels.

9. VOTER EDUCATION

## Engendering the Registration Process

- *We Use the Media as a Partner.*
- *You want to get your message out They want interesting news stories.*
- *We have a common interest!*

We help the media to understand the value of gender-sensitive reporting and to encourage local reporters to shape and foster public opinion for positive changes in society -from a lack of female members of the media itself to the issue of longstanding and deeply-rooted cultural stigmas preventing journalists from making women visible.

We usually contract media houses to make women candidates visible by publishing their profiles in their newspapers on a daily or weekly basis

*If the media portray women candidates fairly in their reporting it will enable them to play a constructive role beyond elections to hold their leaders accountable and to engage in civic organizations. They can also play a positive role in assisting women candidates on the campaign trail."*

## Advocacy Campaign

We launch an Advocacy campaign for women to vote and be voted for through T-shirts, posters, stickers culture-sensitive messages, nationwide radio programmes produced in the language most widely-used in each community (as radio airtime is relatively affordable and can provide a better vehicle to target women voters).

### *Such campaigns are successful in:*

1. mobilizing both male and female voters.
2. providing a forum for people to hear and raise issues important to them and stay abreast of the electoral processes.
3. prevent violence that might have occurred due to insufficient or false information.

### *Methods used include:*

- T-shirts
- Posters
- Stickers
- Culture-sensitive messages
- Road shows
- Songs

Nationwide radio programmes produced in the local languages since radio airtime is relatively affordable and provides a better vehicle for targeting women voters



## ***Designed Inspiring Advocacy Materials***

*(an ADVOCACY tool -the 50/50 song -Side by side)*

- *Side by side, side by side*
- *Side by side, side by side*
- *Side by side, side by side*
- *No Longer men in front and the women at the back*
- *But men and women working*
- *Side by side, side by side*

Production of a Women's Manifesto in collaboration with all women's groups within the women's forum for the 2002 and 2007/8 General and Local elections

*( one of our analytical tools)*

The barriers preventing women from participating in politics can be summarised as the 10 c's:

- 1.Culture
- 2.Context
- 3.Caring
- 4.Cash
- 5.Confidence
- 6.Corruption
- 7.Co-operation
- 8.Constitutional Constraints
- 9.Capability
- 10.Cronyism

*Publication of Training Manuals for use by trainers and trainees in the run up to all General and Local elections.*

- *A three-phase approach is used in Training Potential Female Aspirants*
- *Phase 1: Development and Publication of a Facilitators' Training Manual and Book of Handouts for Aspirants*
- *Phase 2: Organising Aspirants' Training School*
- *Phase 3: Holding Public Speaking Foras*

## ***Training topics include:***

Breaking the Barriers that prevent Women from participating in elections Leadership Skills and Assertiveness Skills

Making the decision to stand Women joining and advancing in political parties Advocacy Skills Action Planning

### ***The 50/50 Group also uses the three phase training approach to build the capacity of nominated candidates :***

- Phase1: Development of a Facilitators' Training Manual and Book of Handouts for Candidates
- Phase2: Holding a Campaign Training School
- Phase3: Women Candidates' Debates

### ***Training topics Include:***

- Campaign Preparation
- Development of campaign messages
- Strategies for targeting voters
- Speaking in public
- Budgeting and fundraising
- Development of campaign action plan

### **Training women for effective participation at all levels.**

Initiated the advocacy for the 30% quota representation for women. Achieved 50/50 representation of men and women in Ward Committees

We however have a draft Gender Equality Bill that we will be presenting to our new Parliament soon.

Setup a Directory of Professional Women in Sierra Leone to facilitate women's access to the public sphere.

Setting up of the 'Council of Women Councillors.

Setting up the first all Female Parliamentary Caucus with support from OXFAM.

### **A NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENT:**

The first African Women's group to win the prestigious Madeleine K Albright Award The Madeleine K. Albright Grant annually honours an organization that exhibits exceptional promise in creating a greater role for women in political and civic life. NDI created the Albright Grant in 2005 to demonstrate the Institute's sustained commitment to promoting the equitable participation of women in politics and government.

### **End of Presentation**



## Documents



### UN Documents

- **UN Women: Standard Operating Principles for Women's Participation in Democratic Transitions**
- **GA Resolution 66/130/1 Women and Political Participation**
- **Draft Resolution III: Women and Political Participation**





United Nations Entity for Gender Equality  
and the Empowerment of Women

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*Phone: +2 02 2380 1720*  
*Fax: +2 02 27508791*  
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## About UN Women

**UN Women**, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, operational since January 1st 2011, works towards accelerating the United Nations' goals on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

**UN Women** supports innovative and catalytic programmes, advocacy and technical assistance related to women's human rights in countries throughout the world as part of the overall UN development cooperation system.

## Standard Operating Principles for Women's Participation in Democratic Transitions

Democratic transitions present new and unprecedented opportunities to strengthen women's leadership, empowerment and rights. Around the world, as countries transition to democracy, women have asserted their demands for political freedom, for participation, representation, and accountability.

As universal as these goals are, they remain elusive for many women as well as other social groups, such as youth and minorities. Progress has been too slow in increasing numbers of women in representative office – they still average just one in five parliamentarians and are also poorly represented in local decision-making bodies, whether as mayors or local council members. Political institutions – from political parties to electoral commissions – often lack capacity to ensure that women's interests are articulated and addressed in public policy.

Accountability institutions are not consistent in ensuring that power-holders answer to women for failures to protect women's rights or respond to their needs. When women and their interests are marginalized, the sustainability and benefits of democracies are also threatened.

In view of the considerable contributions that women make to democracy building, UN Women has outlined a set of core standard practices that will contribute to expanding women's capacities to advance their interests, and build public accountability for women's rights. As 'standard operating principles' for democracy assistance and governance reform, they will ensure that women participate in all political processes, that their rights and needs are substantively represented, and that those in power can answer to women.

## **Standard Operating Principles for Women's Participation in Democratic Transitions**

### ***Principle 1: Ensure Free and Fair elections for women:***

Promote temporary special measures such as quotas, waivers of nomination fees, access to public media, access to public resources, sanctions on non-complying political parties, to increase women's participation as both elected and appointed decision-makers in public institutions. Take measures to address the factors (violence against women, lack of childcare, gender-biased media reporting and lack of campaign financing, lack of identity cards) preventing women from participating in politics.

### ***Principle 2: Encourage political parties to address gender equality:***

Provide all parties with technical assistance to integrate women and gender equality issues into their policies and structures. Promote political party codes of conduct on application of gender equality standards for elections.

### ***Principle 3: Support women's civil society organizations to advance women's interests:***

Provide assistance to develop collective policy agendas for instance through Women's Charters or by holding National Conventions of Women at least a year prior to national elections.

### ***Principle 4: Build accountability for women's rights in public institutions:***

Ensure that constitutional revision processes consider the impact of the design of political, judicial and other public institutions on women's participation and rights. Ensure harmonization with international standards on women's rights. Promote accountability mechanisms and governance reforms that address women's needs such as gender responsive service delivery, budgeting and access to information.

### ***Principle 5: Enhance policy-making and oversight capacity of women in public office:***

Support women's parliamentary caucuses as well as other parliamentary structures (committees and party caucuses) to address gender equality.



***Principle 6: Promote gender justice:***

Build gender responsive transitional justice and justice sector reform to ensure jurisprudence on women's political rights, and promote women as lawyers, judges and paralegals.



UN Women Photo/ Mohamed Samy



UN Women Photo/Enas  
Abu El Komsan



UN Women Photo:  
Enas Abu El Komsan





# General Assembly

Distr.: General  
19 March 2012

Sixty-sixth session  
Agenda item 28 (a)

## Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[on the report of the Third Committee (A/66/455 and Corr.1)]

### 66/130. Women and political participation

*The General Assembly,*

*Reaffirming* the obligations of all States to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms as stated in the Charter of the United Nations, and guided by the purposes and principles of human rights instruments,

*Reaffirming also* the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,<sup>1</sup> which states that everyone has the right to take part in the Government of his or her country directly, or through freely chosen representatives, and the right of equal access to public service,

*Guided by* the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,<sup>2</sup> which affirms human rights and fundamental freedoms and equality for women around the world, and which states, inter alia, that States parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country,

*Reaffirming* the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action<sup>3</sup> and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”,<sup>4</sup>

*Recognizing* the central role of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) in leading and coordinating action to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women within the United Nations system, as well as in supporting all countries’ efforts to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women,

*Recognizing also* the important contributions that women have made towards the achievement of representative, transparent and accountable Governments in many countries,

<sup>1</sup> Resolution 217 A (III).

<sup>2</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1249, No. 20378.

<sup>3</sup> *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

<sup>4</sup> Resolution S-23/2, annex, and resolution S-23/3, annex.



A/RES/66/130

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*Stressing* the critical importance of women's political participation in all contexts, including in times of peace and of conflict and at all stages of political transition, concerned that many obstacles still prevent women from participating in political life on equal terms with men, and noting in that regard that situations of political transition may provide a unique opportunity to address such obstacles,

*Recognizing* the essential contributions that women around the world continue to make to the achievement and maintenance of international peace and security and to the full realization of all human rights, to the promotion of sustainable development and economic growth, and to the eradication of poverty, hunger and disease,

*Reaffirming* that the active participation of women, on equal terms with men, at all levels of decision-making is essential to the achievement of equality, sustainable development, peace and democracy,

*Highly concerned* that women in every part of the world continue to be largely marginalized from the political sphere, often as a result of discriminatory laws, practices, attitudes and gender stereotypes, low levels of education, lack of access to health care and the disproportionate effect of poverty on women,

*Recognizing* the importance of empowering all women through education and training in government, public policy, economics, civics, information technology and science to ensure that they develop the knowledge and skills needed to make full contributions to society and the political process,

*Reaffirming* the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding and the need for Member States and the United Nations system to increase the role of women in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution and the rebuilding of post-conflict societies, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) of 31 October 2000 and its subsequent follow-up resolutions, as well as other relevant United Nations resolutions,

*Noting with appreciation* the establishment by the Human Rights Council of the Working Group on Discrimination against Women in Law and in Practice,

1. *Reaffirms* its resolution 58/142 of 22 December 2003 on women and political participation, and calls upon all States to implement it fully;

2. *Calls upon* all States to eliminate laws, regulations and practices that, in a discriminatory manner, prevent or restrict women's participation in the political process;

3. *Also calls upon* all States to enhance the political participation of women, to accelerate the achievement of equality between men and women and, in all situations, including in situations of political transition, to promote and protect the human rights of women with respect to:

- (a) Engaging in political activities;
- (b) Taking part in the conduct of public affairs;
- (c) Associating freely;
- (d) Assembling peacefully;

(e) Expressing their opinions and seeking, receiving and imparting information and ideas freely;

(f) Voting in elections and public referendums and being eligible for election to publicly elected bodies on equal terms with men;

(g) Participating in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof, holding public office and performing public functions at all levels of government;

4. *Calls upon* States in situations of political transition to take effective steps to ensure the participation of women on equal terms with men in all phases of political reform, from decisions on whether to call for reforms in existing institutions to decisions regarding transitional governments, to the formulation of government policy, to the means of electing new democratic governments;

5. *Urges* all States to comply fully with their obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,<sup>2</sup> urges States that have not yet ratified or acceded to the Convention to do so, and urges States parties to the Convention to consider signing, ratifying or acceding to the Optional Protocol thereto;<sup>5</sup>

6. *Also urges* all States to take, inter alia, the following actions to ensure women's equal participation, and encourages the United Nations system and other international and regional organizations, within their existing mandates, to enhance their assistance to States in their national efforts:

(a) To review the differential impact of their electoral systems on the political participation of women and their representation in elected bodies and to adjust or reform those systems where appropriate;

(b) To take all appropriate measures to eliminate prejudices that are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women and that constitute a barrier to women's access to and participation in the political sphere, and to adopt inclusive approaches to their political participation;

(c) To strongly encourage political parties to remove all barriers that directly or indirectly discriminate against the participation of women, to develop their capacity to analyse issues from a gender perspective, and to adopt policies, as appropriate, to promote the ability of women to participate fully at all levels of decision-making within those political parties;

(d) To promote awareness and recognition of the importance of women's participation in the political process at the community, local, national and international levels;

(e) To develop mechanisms and training to encourage women to participate in the electoral process, political activities and other leadership activities, and empower women to assume public responsibilities by developing and providing appropriate tools and skills, in consultation with women;

(f) To implement appropriate measures within governmental bodies and public sector institutions to eliminate direct or indirect barriers to and enhance women's participation in all levels of political decision-making;

<sup>5</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2131, No. 20378.

(g) To accelerate the implementation of strategies, as appropriate, that promote gender balance in political decision-making, and take all appropriate measures to encourage political parties to ensure that women have a fair and equal opportunity to compete for all elective public positions;

(h) To improve and broaden women's access to information and communications technologies, including e-government tools, in order to enable political participation and to promote engagement in broader democratic processes, while also improving the responsiveness of these technologies to women's needs, including those of marginalized women;

(i) To investigate allegations of violence, assault or harassment of women elected officials and candidates for political office, create an environment of zero tolerance for such offences and, to ensure accountability, take all appropriate steps to prosecute those responsible;

(j) To encourage greater involvement of women who may be marginalized, including indigenous women, women with disabilities, women from rural areas and women of any ethnic, cultural or religious minority, in decision-making at all levels, and address and counter the barriers faced by marginalized women in accessing and participating in politics and decision-making at all levels;

(k) To encourage the promotion of programmes geared towards the sensitization and orientation of youth and children, in particular young women and girls, on the importance of the political process and women's participation in politics;

(l) To ensure that measures to reconcile family and professional life apply equally to women and men, bearing in mind that equitable sharing of family responsibilities between women and men and reduction of the double burden of paid and unpaid work can help to create an enabling environment for women's political participation;

(m) To promote the granting of appropriate maternity and paternity leave in order to facilitate women's political participation;

(n) To take proactive measures to address factors preventing or hindering women from participating in politics, such as violence, poverty, lack of access to quality education and health care, and gender stereotypes;

(o) To monitor and evaluate progress in the representation of women in decision-making positions;

7. *Encourages* States to ensure an expanded role for women in the prevention, management and resolution of conflict and in mediation and peacebuilding efforts, as called for in Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent relevant resolutions;

8. *Also encourages* States to appoint women to posts within all levels of their Governments, including, where applicable, bodies responsible for designing constitutional, electoral, political or institutional reforms;

9. *Further encourages* States to commit themselves to establishing the goal of gender balance in governmental bodies and committees, as well as in public administrative entities, and in the judiciary, including, inter alia and as appropriate, setting specific targets and implementing measures to substantially increase the number of women with a view to achieving equal representation of women and men, if necessary through positive action, in all governmental and public administration positions;

10. *Encourages* States and relevant civil society organizations to support programmes that facilitate women's participation in political and other leadership activities, including peer support and capacity development for new office holders, and to promote public/private civil society partnerships for women's empowerment;

11. *Invites* States to exchange experience and best practices on women's political participation in all phases of the political process, including in times of political change and reform;

12. *Notes with interest* the focus, inter alia, on the political participation of women, including the issues raised in the present resolution, in the work of the Human Rights Council Working Group on Discrimination against Women in Law and in Practice;

13. *Encourages* States to disseminate the present resolution among all relevant institutions, in particular national, regional and local authorities, as well as among political parties;

14. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution, and encourages Governments to provide precise data on the political participation of women at all levels, including, where appropriate, information on the political participation of women in times of political transition.

*89th plenary meeting  
19 December 2011*





### Draft resolution III Women and political participation

*The General Assembly,*

*Reaffirming* the obligations of all States to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms as stated in the Charter of the United Nations, and guided by the purposes and principles of human rights instruments,

*Reaffirming also* the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,<sup>1</sup> which states that everyone has the right to take part in the Government of his or her country directly, or through freely chosen representatives, and the right of equal access to public service,

*Guided by* the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,<sup>2</sup> which affirms human rights and fundamental freedoms and equality for women around the world, and which states, inter alia, that States parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country,

*Reaffirming* the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,<sup>3</sup> and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century",<sup>4</sup>

*Recognizing* the central role of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) in leading and coordinating action to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women within the United Nations system, as well as in supporting all countries' efforts to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women,

*Recognizing also* the important contributions that women have made towards the achievement of representative, transparent and accountable Governments in many countries,

*Stressing* the critical importance of women's political participation in all contexts, including in times of peace and of conflict and at all stages of political transition, concerned that many obstacles still prevent women from participating in political life on equal terms with men, and noting in that regard that situations of political transition may provide a unique opportunity to address such obstacles,

*Recognizing* the essential contributions that women around the world continue to make to the achievement and maintenance of international peace and security and to the full realization of all human rights, to the promotion of sustainable development and economic growth, and to the eradication of poverty, hunger and disease,

*Reaffirming* that the active participation of women, on equal terms with men, at all levels of decision-making is essential to the achievement of equality, sustainable development, peace and democracy,

<sup>1</sup> Resolution 217 A (III).

<sup>2</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1249, No. 20378.

<sup>3</sup> *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

<sup>4</sup> Resolution S-23/2, annex, and resolution S-23/3, annex.

5. *Urges* all States to comply fully with their obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,<sup>2</sup> urges States that have not yet ratified or acceded to the Convention to do so, and urges States parties to the Convention to consider signing, ratifying or acceding to the Optional Protocol thereto;

6. *Also urges* all States to take, inter alia, the following actions to ensure women's equal participation, and encourages the United Nations system and other international and regional organizations, within their existing mandates, to enhance their assistance to States in their national efforts to:

(a) Review the differential impact of their electoral systems on the political participation of women and their representation in elected bodies and to adjust or reform those systems where appropriate;

(b) Take all appropriate measures to eliminate prejudices that are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women and that constitute a barrier to women's access to and participation in the political sphere, and to adopt inclusive approaches to their political participation;

(c) Strongly encourage political parties to remove all barriers that directly or indirectly discriminate against the participation of women, to develop their capacity to analyse issues from a gender perspective, and to adopt policies, as appropriate, to promote the ability of women to participate fully at all levels of decision-making within those political parties;

(d) Promote awareness and recognition of the importance of women's participation in the political process at the community, local, national and international levels;

(e) Develop mechanisms and training to encourage women to participate in the electoral process, political activities and other leadership activities, and empower women to assume public responsibilities by developing and providing appropriate tools and skills, in consultation with women;

(f) Implement appropriate measures within governmental bodies and public sector institutions to eliminate direct or indirect barriers to and enhance women's participation in all levels of political decision-making;

(g) Accelerate the implementation of strategies, as appropriate, that promote gender balance in political decision-making, and take all appropriate measures to encourage political parties to ensure that women have a fair and equal opportunity to compete for all elective public positions;

(h) Improve and broaden women's access to information and communication technology, including e-government tools, in order to enable political participation and to promote engagement in broader democratic processes, while also improving the responsiveness of these technologies to women's needs, including those of marginalized women;

(i) Investigate allegations of violence, assault or harassment of women elected officials and candidates to political office, create an environment of zero tolerance for such offences and, to ensure accountability, take all appropriate steps to prosecute those responsible;



13. *Encourages* States to disseminate the present resolution among all relevant institutions, in particular national, regional and local authorities, as well as among political parties;

14. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution, and encourages Governments to provide precise data on the political participation of women at all levels, including, where appropriate, information on the political participation of women in times of political transition.



## Other documents

- **South Africa Constitution**

For reference, please visit the following web site:

<http://www.info.gov.za/documents/constitution/>

- **Women Charter: South Africa**

For reference, please visit the following web site:

<http://www.kznhealth.gov.za/womenscharter.pdf>



Adopted at the National Convention convened by the  
Women's National Coalition,  
25 - 27 February, 1994.

## **THE WOMEN'S CHARTER FOR EFFECTIVE EQUALITY**

*The Women's Charter gives expression to the diverse experiences, visions and aspirations of South African women. We are breaking our silence. We claim respect and recognition of our human rights and dignity. We require effective change in our status and material conditions in the future South Africa.*

### **PREAMBLE**

We, women of South Africa, claim our rights. We claim full and equal participation in the creation of a non-sexist, non-racist, democratic society.

As women, we have come together in a coalition of organisations to engage in a campaign that enabled women to draw on their diverse experiences and define what changes are required within the new political, legal, economic and social system.

South Africa is the poorer politically, economically and socially for having prevented more than half of its people from fully contributing to its development.

Women's subordination and oppression has taken many forms under patriarchy, custom and tradition, colonialism, racism and apartheid.

We recognise the diversity of our experiences and recognise also the commonalities of our subordination as women.

We are committed to seizing this historic moment to achieve effective equality in South Africa. The development of the potential of all our people, women and men, will enrich and benefit the whole of society.

Women have achieved success and made invaluable contributions to society despite widespread gender discrimination.

We claim recognition and respect for the work we do in the home, in the workplace and in the community. We claim shared responsibilities and decision-making in all areas of public and private life.

Democracy and human rights, if they are to be meaningful to women, must address our historic subordination and oppression. For women to be able to participate in, and shape the nature and form of our democracy, the concepts of both human rights and democracy must be redefined and interpreted in ways which encompass women's diverse experiences.

We require society to be reorganised, and its institutions to be restructured to take cognisance of all women. In particular, women should have full opportunity and access to leadership positions and decision-making at all levels and in all sectors of society. Affirmative action could be one means of achieving this.

We hereby set out a programme for equality in all spheres of public and private life, including the law and the administration of justice; the economy; education and training; development infrastructure and the environment; social services; political and civic life; family life and partnerships; custom, culture and religion; violence against women; health; and the media.

## **ARTICLE 1: EQUALITY**

The principle of equality underlies all our claims in this Charter. We recognise that the achievement of social, economic, political and legal equality is indivisible. Our struggle for equality involves the recognition of the disadvantages that women suffer in all spheres of their lives. As a result, similar treatment of women and men may not result in true equality. Therefore the promotion of equality between men and women will sometimes require distinctions to be made. No distinction, however, should be made that would disadvantage women.

We demand that equality apply to every aspect of our lives, including the family, the workplace and the state. The claim to equality shall not be limited to our relationship with the state.

- \* The responsibility to ensure that the principle of equality informs all aspects of our lives shall not be limited to the state but shall be borne by all, including employers, family members and civil society.
- \* The principle of equality shall be embodied at all levels in legislation and government policy. Specific legislation shall be introduced to ensure the practical realisation of equality. Programmes of affirmative action could be a means of achieving equality.
- \* The state shall establish appropriate mechanisms to ensure the effective protection and promotion of equality for women, which shall be accessible to all women in South Africa.
- \* There shall be educational programmes and appropriate mechanisms to address gender bias and stereotypes and to promote equality for women in all spheres.
- \* Human rights education shall be provided to raise awareness of women's status, and to empower women to claim their constitutional and legal rights.

## **ARTICLE 2: LAW AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE**

The law and the administration of justice shall secure the practical realisation of equality for women. This can be achieved only with the full participation of women. Moreover, the position of women must be taken into account in deciding policy, determining legislative priorities, and in formulating, applying, interpreting, adjudicating and enforcing all laws.

- \* Women shall be fully represented on, and participate in, the selection of all candidates for all judicial and quasi-judicial structures, including traditional courts and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms.
- \* Women and men shall have equal legal status and capacity in civil and customary law, including, among others, full contractual rights, the right to acquire and hold rights in property, the right to inheritance and the right to secure credit.
- \* No institution, public or private, shall restrict or impede women in exercising their legal rights.
- \* Positive and practical measures shall be taken to ensure fairness and justice for women complainants and accused in the criminal justice system
- \* Women offenders shall not be disadvantaged. Consideration should be given to their relationships with their children.
- \* There shall be accessible and affordable legal services. The position of paralegals in assisting women to claim their rights shall be recognised.
- \* Women shall not be disadvantaged in legal and quasi-legal proceedings.



## ARTICLE 3: ECONOMY

Women claim involvement in decision-making and full participation at all levels and in all aspects of the formal and informal economy. Economic policy must secure women's place in the economy. All definitions of economic activity (such as those used in the national accounts) must be expanded to specify informal sector and subsistence activities and must include all forms of unpaid labour.

- \* All women shall have access to jobs and skills training provided by the state and private sector.
- \* The full participation of women in economic decision-making should be facilitated.
- \* Effective affirmative action programmes must be introduced for women.
- \* There needs to be a flexible reorganisation of the workplace to take account of family responsibilities.
- \* There should be provision for parental rights, including paid maternity leave with job security, adequate provision of child care facilities and reasonable working hours to accommodate family responsibilities in the public and private sector.
- \* There shall be no categorisation of jobs on the basis of gender, nor shall gender stereotypes determine the work that women do.
- \* Measures must be adopted to attain equal pay for work of equal value.
- \* Recognition must be given to women who are breadwinners.
- \* There shall be no discrimination of any kind, such as that based upon gender or marital status, in the provision of benefits, including housing, pensions and medical schemes.
- \* There shall be no discriminatory taxation, including that based upon gender and marital status. Dependants supported by women shall be recognised for the purposes of taxation.
- \* The law shall protect women against unfair business practices and unfair labour practices, including in the informal sector.
- \* Women must be protected from sexual harassment and violence in all places where women work.
- \* Access to group benefits, such as accident and disability insurance, group housing schemes, sick leave and maternity benefits, shall be available to women, including those outside formal employment.
- \* Given that women's access to credit is currently based on their ability to supply collateral or is linked to their marital status, women need access to alternative means to obtain credit.
- \* Health and safety standards must be ensured in both the formal and informal sectors of the economy.
- \* Prostitution shall be decriminalised. Appropriate measures shall be taken to protect the health and safety of sex workers and their clients.

## ARTICLE 4: EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Women and girls claim the right to education. Education and training, including curriculum development, should acknowledge and accommodate the diversity of women's needs and experiences in every aspect of life. Education and training should be a continuous lifelong process, which should include educare, adult basic and continuing education, primary, secondary and tertiary education and skills training. Women shall participate at all levels in educational policy-making, as well as in the management and administration of

**education and training.**

- \* Every women and girl shall have access to education and training to realise her full potential. In particular, no women or girl shall be excluded from education and training on the basis of pregnancy, domestic and child care responsibilities.
- \* Appropriate educational institutions and social services, including child care, shall be provided to enable the active participation of women in society. In particular, the participation of rural women, single mothers, and disabled women and girls must be addressed.
- \* Women and girls shall have equal access to special funds through affirmative action for education and training.
- \* Appropriate sex education shall be provided for girls and boys, women and men.
- \* Women and girls at educational institutions shall be protected against sexual harassment and abuse.

## **ARTICLE 5: DEVELOPMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

Women shall have access to the full range of basic development resources and services necessary to sustain a healthy and productive life. In particular, rural women and informal settlement residents require basic resources. Protection of natural resources shall take into account the needs of women.

- \* Women shall participate in designing and implementing development programmes to meet their needs.
- \* Employment generated from development and infrastructure programmes shall also benefit women.
- \* Adequate, accessible and safe water supplies and sanitation must be made available to all communities, especially in rural areas and informal settlements.
- \* Electricity or other appropriated sources of energy must be extended to all communities as a matter of priority.
- \* Women need safe transport networks and effective communications services.
- \* Women need affordable and secure housing.
- \* All women, including women living under customary law, must have access to land and security of tenure.
- \* All women shall have access to adequate health care, recreational, educational and social welfare facilities.

## **ARTICLE 6: SOCIAL SERVICES**

Women are primarily responsible for maintaining the household and the community. Accessible and affordable development orientated social services should be a right and not a privilege. These must be available to women in all areas of their lives, including in the home, the workplace, health and education. These social services include emotional counselling, family counselling, preventive care, material assistance, clinics and hospitals. Such services should be provided by both the state and the private sector in accordance with the principles of social justice, appropriateness and accessibility.

- \* The system of social services should cater for the special needs of groups such as the disabled, the elderly, single parents and rural women.
- \* Social pensions and disability grants should be available to all women, irrespective of age, on the basis of need.
- \* Appropriate, accessible and affordable mental health services must be provided for women.

## **ARTICLE 7: POLITICAL AND CIVIC LIFE**

Women shall have the right to participate fully in all levels of political, civic and community life.

- \* Women shall have full opportunity and access to leadership and decision-making positions at all levels of government.
- \* Rural women must be part of the decision-making structures in traditional communities.
- \* Women shall have equal access to, and the right to representation on, public bodies.
- \* All governmental institutions, including traditional institutions, and non-governmental organisations shall be restructured in accordance with the principles of equality and democracy.
- \* Every woman must have the right to acquire, change or retain her nationality on a non-discriminatory basis and to pass it on to her children.
- \* Every woman must be free from political intimidation and threat to her person.
- \* A variety of mechanisms must be available for women as individuals and as groups to influence legislative change which affect their lives.

## **ARTICLE 8: FAMILY LIFE AND PARTNERSHIPS**

All family types should receive recognition. Acknowledgement of women's responsibilities must be reflected in their decision-making powers within the family and in the management of the household. Domestic cares, duties and obligations should be shared by partners and all members of the household.

- \* The diversity of family types must be recognised and treated fairly.
- \* Women shall have freedom of choice in establishing relationships.
- \* Women and men shall have such rights in respect of, among other things, division of property; maintenance and arrangements in respect of minor and/or dependant children both during and at the dissolution of a marriage; as are required to ensure fair and equitable treatment of both with regard to their respective means, earning capacity, needs and responsibilities.
- \* Women shall also have the right to decide on the nature and frequency of sexual contact within marriage and intimate relationships.
- \* Women should have equitable access to the financial resources of the household, and access to information with regard to the economic management of the household.
- \* The integrity of the partnership has to be maintained without external and familial interference, except where there is reason to believe physical, sexual and psychological abuse is occurring.

- \* Women, including women married under customary law or by religious rites, shall also be entitled to guardianship over their children.
- \* Women shall have adequate, effective and enforceable maintenance and/or social welfare benefits for themselves and their children.

## **ARTICLE 9: CUSTOM, CULTURE AND RELIGION**

Customary, cultural and religious practices frequently subordinate women.

- \* Custom, culture and religion, insofar as these impact upon the status of women in marriage, in law and in public life, shall be subject to the equality clause in the Bill of Rights.
- \* All women shall have the freedom to practise their own religion, culture or beliefs without fear.
- \* Women, including those under customary law, must have the right to inherit.

## **ARTICLE 10: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

Violence in all its forms is endemic to South African society. Both sexual and domestic violence are pervasive and all women live under the threat of, or experience, violence.

- \* Women shall be entitled to security and integrity of the person which shall include the right to be free from all forms of violence everywhere.
- \* There shall be legal protection for all women against sexual and racial harassment, all forms of abuse and assault. The family advocate should also be entitled to act on behalf of the abused woman in the family.
- \* Facilities, staffed by trained personnel, where women can report all cases of criminal and other abuse, and undergo the appropriate examination and treatment, shall be provided by the state.
- \* There shall be accessible and affordable shelters and counselling services for survivors of rape, battery, sexual assault, incest and other forms of abuse.
- \* Appropriate education and training must be provided for police, prosecutors, magistrates, judges, district surgeons and other people involved in dealing with cases of rape, battery, sexual assault, incest and other forms of abuse.
- \* The state shall be responsible for public education about the dignity and integrity of the person.

## **ARTICLE 11: HEALTH**

Equal, affordable, accessible and appropriate health care services, which meet women's specific health needs, and which treat women with dignity and respect, shall be provided. Women should be made aware of their rights in relation to health services. Health services must be appropriately orientated to meet women's health needs and priorities. Basic life-sustaining services, such as water and sanitation, which ensure good health, must be made accessible to all South Africans by the state.

- \* Women have the right to control over their bodies, which includes the right to make reproductive decisions.

- \* Access to information should be provided to enable women to make informed choices about their bodies and about health care. This includes information pertaining to reproductive health services, sexually transmitted diseases including AIDS; contraception, cervical and breast cancer; infertility; ante-natal, labour and post-natal care.
- \* Education about reproductive health services should be provided free of charge to both men and women.
- \* Every person shall have access to adequate nutrition.
- \* Single and married women should have access to membership of any type of medical aid or insurance scheme, without discrimination on the basis of gender.

## **ARTICLE 12: MEDIA**

The diversity of women's lives and experiences, and their contributions in all areas of public and private life, shall be reflected in the media. This diversity shall be reflected in a positive, active and life-affirming manner. Negative and injurious portrayals of women and narrowly defined roles must be challenged. The dignity of women should be preserved and promoted by the media.

- \* Women shall be adequately represented in all media institutions, including film, print and electronic media.
- \* Women must have access to the necessary training to fully utilise the media, as decision-makers, participants, consumers and producers.
- \* The different ways in which women and men are represented in the media must be monitored.



## About the Speakers

- Ilham Abdelwahab
- Omar Abou Eish
- Hoda Badran
- Kalthoum Badreddine
- Amr Boubakri
- Wafa Bugaighis
- Soulef Guessoum
- Imen Houimel
- Said Khezami
- Nemata Majeks-Walker
- Hesham Mokhtar
- Maya Morsy
- Thoko Mpumlwana
- Geoffrey D. Prewitt
- Mansour Sadeghi
- Ali El Sawi
- Mervat Tallawy
- Sameera Al Tuwaijri
- Neel Uprety
- Carlos Valenzuela
- Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne

*\* List based on alphabetical order of Family Name*





## Ilham Abdelwahab

Ms. Ilham Abdelwahab is the Director-General of the Women's section at the Yemeni High Electoral Commission, which was established in 2005. She is the Yemeni representative at the Asia and African People's Solidarity Organization which is based in Cairo. She also heads the Transparency Center for Studies and Research and serves as the Deputy Head of the Civic Alliance to support the national dialogue in Yemen. Ms. Abdelwahab is a member of the Advisory Board of the Ministry of Human Rights in Yemen. She worked on draft legal and constitutional proposals of electoral systems best suited to enhance Yemeni women's representation in the parliament by at least 30%. She prepared and implemented the first program for the political empowerment of women in Yemen, carried out by the Director-General of Women's Affairs at the High Electoral Commission through the UNDP electoral support program, which contributed to open channels of communication with political party leaders and civil society organizations to bridge the gender gap between male and female voters and candidates for their increased political representation.

## Omar Abou Eish

Ambassador Omar Abou Eish is the deputy Assistant Foreign Minister of Arab Republic of Egypt and director of International Cooperation for Development Department. He assumed his responsibilities since September 2011. As a career Diplomat, his professional experience was a bit diversified. For 10 years, his assignments at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs mainly focused on the Multilateral Economic Affairs, especially, at the United Nations Specialized Agencies Department, the Environment and Sustainable Development Department and finally International Cooperation Department. His missions abroad focused on bilateral relations. He spent sixteen years at the Egyptian Missions in Jeddah, Brasilia, Paris and finally Moscow. He actually resides in Cairo with his wife and two sons.

## Hoda Badran

Dr. Badran is the Chairperson of Alliance for Arab Women (AAW) and the Egyptian Feminist Union (EFU). She is also a member of The Committee on the Child, a member of the Committee of Social Policies (Ministry of Social Solidarity), and a member of the Board of Trustees of the Egyptian Association for Sustainable Development. Some of the positions she covered in the past include Regional Coordinator at the Conference of NGOs (CONGO) in consultative status with the UN, Professor Emeritus of Social Work at Helwan University in Cairo, and First President of the Committee on the Rights of the Child Centre of Human Rights at the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland. She received her Bachelor of Science in Sociology from the American University in Cairo and her Bachelor of Science in Social Work from the School of Social Work at Helwan University. She also completed a Masters degree in Social Administration at the University of Louisville in Kentucky and a Ph.D. in Social Welfare on Community Organization and Citizen's Participation at the School of Applied Social Sciences in Case Western Reserve, Cleveland, Ohio.

## **Kalthoum Badreddine**

Ms. Badreddine graduated from the Faculty of law in Tunis. She is a Barrister at the High Court in Tunisia and was a member of the Regional Committee of South of Tunisia of the Tunisian Bar Association from 2003 to 2009. She is involved in different Tunisian NGOs and she is a founding member of the Forum of Arab Women Lawyers. She was elected member of the National Constituent Assembly on 23 October 2011 and appointed president of the Commission of General Legislation. In July 2012, Ms. Kalthoum Badreddine was elected member of the Shura Council of the Ennahdha Movement.

## **Omar Boubakri**

Dr. Boubakri holds a PhD in public law from the University of Sousse in Tunisia and teaches at the faculty of law since 1997. He was a member of the Commission of experts of High Authority of Protection of Revolution, Democratic Transition and Political Reforms in Tunisia from Feb. to October 2011. He was the president of the Independent Electoral Authority of the district of Sousse during the elections for the National Constituent Assembly. He is now a national legal consultant with UNDP in Tunis. He published several studies in Tunisia and abroad on democratic transition, human rights and elections. He participated also in a number of regional and international conferences on the same topics.

## **Wafa Bugaighis - Director of the International Bureau of the Ministry Of Education for East Libya.**

Ms. Bugaighis is a Chemical Engineer graduated in 1987, Catholic University Of America, Washington D.C. U.S.A. Upon her graduation she returned to Libya and started working for the Arabian Gulf Oil Company for 14 years. In 2005, she resigned in objection to corruption and started working in a private Education Institute ( Nour Al Maarif Education Institute) until February 2011. Participated in the revolution and took part in volunteer work in the hospitals and other works (issuing statements and contacting international media) necessary to support the interior front. She later joined the Local Council Office for Education and volunteered as a coordinator with the International Organizations, and Supporting Governments present in Benghazi at that time. Later on, in May she was appointed as the Director of the International Bureau of the Ministry Of Education for East Libya.

In July 2011, she was among a group of distinguished Libyan women to establish a nongovernmental body to support women participate in decision-making. In February 2012, she was elected as the Chairwoman of Board of the Committee to Support women's participation in Decision Making.

## Soulef Guessoum

Ms. Soulef Guessoum is a Parliamentary Specialist in Tunisia. Prior to this, she was the Arab States' UNDP Regional Coordinator of the project: Developing the Capacity of National Parliaments to Prevent Conflict in Cairo. Her special focuses are: Parliaments, Political parties and women participation in politics.

Previously, she was a Project Manager of the parliament project conducted by UNDP in Algeria from 2008 to 2010. Also, she was a Senior Program Officer with the National Democratic Institute for international affairs (NDI) from 2005 to 2008 working on elections, political parties, media and women in politics. From 1995 to 2004 she worked as journalist for TV, radio and newspaper.

Ms. Soulef holds a Bachelor in Information and Communication from the University of Algiers and a Master in Human Rights and Democratization from the University of Malta.

## Imen Houimel

Imen Houimel is a Labour General Inspector and the General Director of Women and Family Affairs at the Ministry of Women and Family Affairs. She completed her first undergraduate degree in business and economics at the University of Law, Management and Economics and obtained her Master from the National Institute of Labour and Social Studies. Ms. Houimel graduated from the National Institute for Defense Studies in 2011. She is the General Secretaire of the Tunisian Association for the Deaf.

Ms. Houimel is also the Tunisian representative of the Ministry at the African Women's Rights Observatory (AWRO). She is the focal point of Tunisia in the American initiative (launched by the White House) "Equal Future partnership" and the representative of the Ministry of Women and Family Affairs at the High Authority for Human Rights.

## Said Khezami

Mr. Khezami is a graduate of the Institute of Press and Information Sciences at the University of Tunis. He began his work at the Tunisian national television as an editor and news presenter. He covered many national and international events through his work as an editor and producer with Oman television. Mr. Khezami contributed to the research, translation of documentaries and also supervised the training of a team of young journalists to develop and produce broadcast news.

Said Khezami worked with Al-Jazeera TV and contributed to the production of two programs. While at Abu Dhabi TV, he covered the war in Afghanistan in 2001, the news on Cyprus in 2003 and the first multi-party elections in Iraq in 2005. Currently, Mr. Khezami is the News Chief Editor of the Tunisian National Television in Channel 1. He also contributes to print media.

## **Nemata Majeks-Walker**

Dr. Majeks-Walker has worked in gender, leadership, advocacy and politics since 1999. She has worked in Sierra Leone, the UK, the USA, Pakistan, Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana, the Gambia and Liberia with women politicians, civil society activists, youths and members of the media. Dr. Nemata is the founder of the 50/50 Group of Sierra Leone, a non-partisan campaign for equal representation for women in politics and public life through training and advocacy. She led the group's lobbying work on equality between women and men in politics and public life as its first president. Since its inception, the 50/50 Group has had the most profound positive impact on women, particularly in the field of politics, both at the rural and urban levels. Through its most popular "Breaking the Barriers" training sessions nation-wide, women's capacity have been greatly enhanced, their confidence built, self-esteem and self-efficacy improved. Many women are now highly motivated, outspoken, brave, resourceful and opting for more elective or appointive responsibilities. As a result of their work, there are now more women in Parliament, Local Councils, Cabinet and the Judiciary compared to pre-war Sierra Leone.

Dr. Nemata has extensive experience in women's leadership projects, building the capacity of civil society activists, writing training handbooks, writing proposals for funding and writing research reports in a culturally appropriate manner.

## **Hesham Mokhtar**

Judge Hesham currently serves as a member of the technical secretariat as well as the general committee of the Higher Elections Commission. Under the past Parliamentary elections, he was responsible for coordinating with governmental and international bodies related to elections. He has supervised the technical aspects of the Commission's website, participated in the preparation of procedural manuals for judges, as well as other technical and administrative duties. Judge Hesham is currently a judge at the Economy Court; he holds a Master of Public Administration from the Arab Academy for Science and Technology.

## **Maya Morsy**

Dr. Morsy is Egypt Country Coordinator for UN Women since Jan 2011 and earlier for UNIFEM since 1999. She served in the UNDP Policy Unit for 2 years, as Project Officer for the Public Policy Platform For Action and Monitoring for 1995-1998 years and Girls' Education Specialist for the USAID Institutionalizing Successes for Innovative Schools Projects for 1999. Dr. Morsy was a part time facilitator for communication and management in the City University Program implemented under the Arab Academy for Science and technology through the Arab League from 1997-1999. As Gender and Public Policy Expert by training had worked for the past 16 years, in women human rights, public policies, gender budgeting and performance based budget, gender planning, gender mainstreaming, monitoring and evaluation, and human security with specialization on Women Human Security. Dr. Morsy had a PHD on Public Policies from the Arab Regional Academic Institute, The League of Arab States organization on Public Policies and Women Human Security in the Arab Region and had a Master of Business Administration and Master of Public Administration from City University in Seattle, and B.A Political

Science and minor in Mass Communication from the American University in Cairo, Dr. Morsy coordinated and have several publications in CEDAW, Gender Equality and Democracy, Gender Equality and Freedoms, Women Human Security.

## **Thoko Mpumlwana - Deputy Chairperson of the Commission for Gender Equality**

She holds education degrees from the University of South Africa and the University of Natal-Pietermaritzburg. Ms. Mpumlwana was awarded a MA in the fields of Curriculum Development and Teacher Education by Michigan State University in the United States. Her professional career has focused largely on teaching and promotion of education. Ms. Mpumlwana's commitment to justice especially on political, human, children and women rights and empowerment has driven her activism. In this context, Church and involvement in NGO's in the 2111's succeeded her student activism of the 1970s where her chief interests were in the development of the black community and women. The challenges of gender justice have held her abiding interest in championing the women's challenges of poverty and inequality in the democratic dispensation. She currently chairs the Film and Publication Board and recently completed two seven-year terms at Electoral Commission of South Africa where she served as the Deputy Chairperson in the last term. She worked at the Centre for Scientific Development at the Human Sciences Research Council on gender equity and promoting research by women in higher education. She has served as a member of the Council of the University of Pretoria and sits on Boards, including: the Foundation for Human Rights, South African Women in Dialogue ) SAWID(, Genderlinks, Independent Development Trust )IDT( and the Women's Development Foundation.

## **Geoffrey D. Prewitt**

Geoffrey Prewitt is the Deputy of UNDP's Regional Centre for Arab States in Cairo. He has over 15 years' experience serving UNDP and Civil Society Organizations. Prior to being posted in Cairo in 2011, he was the Team Leader for both the Governance and Poverty Reduction Teams of UNDP's Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People (PAPP) as well as serving as its Senior Governance Adviser.

Mr. Prewitt worked with UNDP as an Advisor in Eastern Europe and the CIS, Central and Eastern Africa, and New York HQ. Prior to joining UNDP, he worked with civil society organizations in Malawi and Hungary.

Mr. Prewitt has written and spoken extensively on issues of civic engagement, governance, and political economy of the Arab world; his most recent work has focused on governance transitions in the Arab States, Social Enterprises, Civil Society Organizations Governance, and income-diversification of the not-for-profit sector. Other selected activities include: guest lecturer at the Central-Eastern University in Budapest, convener of a conference at the Bellagio Center (Rockefeller Foundation) on "Working with Men to End Gender Violence: a Global Interchange," and co-founder, with seven other staff, of the UNDP's Men's Group on Gender Equality.

## **Mansour Sadeghi, United Nations Electoral Assistance Division**

Mansour Sadeghi is working with the Electoral Assistance Division of the United Nations (UNEAD) in New York. As an Electoral/Political Affairs Officer, he has been supporting UN's efforts in providing assistance to electoral processes in a number of countries in different regions, including in Malawi, Moldova, Tunisia, Egypt, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea. He has been also part of UNEAD's team supporting the deployment of UN High-Level Panels to Sudan (2010) and Algeria (2012). As the gender focal point in the Division, he has been, also, following the issues related to the United Nations support for the promotion of women's participation in electoral processes including by his contribution to some policy-related documents and guidelines on the matter. Before joining the United Nations in 2009 he had worked for 15 years with the Iranian diplomatic service and had served in a number of diplomatic posts including in New York. Mr. Sadeghi is married and has two sons. He speaks English and Persian (and understands Arabic).

## **Ali El Sawi - Professor of Political Science, Faculty of Economics and Political Science - Cairo University; and Lawyer**

Dr. El-Sawi has over 20 years of experience in legislative development, democracy assistance, participation, institutional capacity building, administrative reform and good governance structures & policies. He is also experienced in monitoring, verification and evaluation of public policies and technical assistance projects. Dr. El Sawi is the Winner of the State Prize, 2000 (Egypt). Currently, he holds the position of a tenured Professor of Political Science, and Supervisor of the Diploma of Parliamentary Studies at Cairo University. Between 1996-2001, he worked as consultant for a USAID-funded Project on Capacity Building of Egypt's People's Assembly. Dr. El-Sawi has been involved in research & development activities on institutional development of parliament with the UNDP, University of Bonn, USAID, the Lebanese Center for Policy Studies, Arab Organization for Administrative Development, and the African Development Bank. He worked extensively with civil society organizations on legislative development. Dr. El Sawi established a Research Unit at Cairo University named: "The Parliamentary Program". He is the author a number of books on the Future of Parliament in the Arab World, Assessing the Performance of the People's Assembly in Egypt, Electoral Systems in the Arab Countries, Parliamentary Media, Women in Parliament, Oversight Functions, Rules & Procedures of the People's Assembly, etc.

## **Mervat Tallawy**

Ambassador Tallawy is the President of the National Council for Women. She has been the Executive Secretary at the level of Under Secretary-General since 2002. She served as Minister for Insurance and Social Affairs of Egypt from 1997 to 1999 after a long and distinguished career in foreign affairs and public service. In her diverse work within the United Nations, she has played a special role in population and gender issues and held several leadership positions in the United Nations' intergovernmental processes, including the Commission on the Status

of Women (CSW), Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and as Deputy Director to the United Nations for Research and Training for the Advancement of Women International (INSTRAW). Moreover, Ms. Tellawy served as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Egypt to Japan 1993-1997 and Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs in charge of International Political and Economic Affairs (1991-1993). She has initiated ideas for and participated in drafting a number of key international documents, including the UN Declaration on Protection of Women and Children in Times of Armed Conflict, the African Agreement on Cooperation with the IAEA on Civilian Use of Nuclear Technology and the Right to Development, and the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). In June 1998, Ms. Tallawy headed the Egyptian Delegation to the UN Special Session on review of the UN Convention on Drug Control and Illicit Trafficking.

## **Sameera al Tuwaijri, Director, Arab States Regional Centre**

Dr. Al-Tuwaijri joined UN Women in July 2012 as the Regional Director of the Arab States Regional Centre in Cairo, Egypt. Dr. Al-Tuwaijri has over 10 years of international development experience in addition to her prior experience as a qualified doctor and director of a leading hospital in her own country. Since 2010, Dr. Al-Tuwaijri has been the lead health specialist for health policy, population and nutrition in the World Bank in Washington. Before taking up her post with the World Bank, she was Director of Occupational Safety and Health in the International Labour Organization in Geneva (2007-1121). She served as UNFPA's Regional Advisor on Health Policy for the Arab States, based in Jordan from 2004 to 2007. She has a Master's Degree in Public Health from Harvard University.

## **Neel Uprety**

Mr. Neel Uprety is the ex-Chairman of the Electoral Commission of Nepal (2009-2012) with over 20 years of electoral experience. He possesses an in-depth knowledge on electoral systems, procedures, and record level contribution in developing cost-effective, transparent biometric based digitalized voter registration and ID card system that can be used for any type of election. Prior to this position, he was an Election Commissioner in Nepal from 2006-2009. He was the Senior Electoral Coordinator during the presidential and parliamentary elections in Afghanistan 2004-2005. Mr. Uprety holds a M.A. Degree in Economics from Tribhuban University in Nepal and a M.S. in Computer Science from Staffordshire University in the United Kingdom.

## **Carlos Valenzuela**

Carlos Valenzuela has worked for the UN in the area of electoral administration and electoral assistance for 20 years. He holds a Masters of Linguistics (University of Wisconsin), Masters of Economics (Paris I, Pantheon-Sorbonne), and a PhD Economic and Social Sciences (Paris I, Pantheon-Sorbonne). His experience in the UN electoral field has been both for peace-keeping operations and UNDP, and since 1997 he has been either chief electoral officer or chief technical assistance in UN missions, as well as special electoral advisor in 14 countries, including South Africa, Mexico, Palestine, and Afghanistan. He was international commissioner in the Iraqi Independent Electoral Commission for the first post-Saddam elections. He has also served in a



number of needs assessment and evaluation missions, including Mali, Honduras, Romania, Nepal, Indonesia and Yemen. He sits in various committees of international electoral organizations and is part of the advisory board of the International Foundation for Elections Systems (IFES), as well as designing and taking part of IFES programs in Afghanistan and Mexico. He was an original member of the committee that designed and launched the BRIDGE initiative, in partnership with the Australian Elections Commission and International IDEA. He has worked for regional associations of electoral authorities, including Eastern Europe, Southern Africa and Latin America.

## **Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne**

Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne is a British politician with thirty years' experience in British and European politics. From 2010 to 2011, she was Vice-Chairman of the Conservative Party under Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, with special responsibility for increasing the participation of women in the party. In 1987, she ran successfully for election, becoming Member of Parliament (MP) for Torridge and West Devon. Moving to the Liberal Democrat Party in 1995, she continued as an MP until 1997, when she was elevated to the House of Lords. In 1999, Baroness Nicholson became a Member of the European Parliament in addition to her House of Lords responsibilities. In this role, she held a number of important positions including Vice Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee; Member of the Sub-Committee on Human Rights; and Rapporteur for Iraq, for Kashmir and for Romania. She was also Vice-President of the Committee on Women's Rights of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly. She was Head of the European Union Election Observation Mission to Yemen in 2006 and has been a member of election observation missions to countries including Iraq, Lebanon, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Palestine, Russia and Kenya. Most recently, she was Chief International Observer to Yemen for the Yemeni elections of February 2012.

Since completing two full terms at the European Parliament in 2009, Baroness Nicholson has continued with her work in the British Parliament, where she is Chairman of the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Foreign Affairs. She is also a Member of the UK Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly to the Council of Europe and the European Security and Defence Assembly, in which capacity she is a Member of the Equal Opportunities for Women and Men Committee.

The first female politician in a family of politicians stretching back many generations, Baroness Nicholson also holds a large number of nonpolitical roles, including Executive Chairman of the Iraq Britain Business Council and Executive Chairman of the AMAR International Charitable Foundation, both of which she founded.







## **List of Guests & Participants**



## Guest Speakers

### **Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne**

EU Parliament and European Council Parliament

### **Ilham Abdel Wahab**

Supreme Commission for Elections and Referendum (Yemen)

### **Neel Uprety**

Former Chief Election Commissioner of Nepal

### **Nemata Majeks-Walker**

Founder and First President of The 50/50 Group of Sierra Leone

### **Thoko Mpumlwana**

Commission for Gender Equality (South Africa)

## Participants:

### **EGYPT**

### **Abdel Atty Shetwey**

Judge

### **Abdel Hakeem Mohamed Omar**

Judge

### **Abdel Moez Ibrahim**

Judge, Former Chairman, High Elections Commission

### **Abdelaziz Salman**

Judge, Presidential Electoral Commission Secretariat

### **Abdo Abu El Ela**

Al Shehab Foundation for Comprehensive Development

### **Affaf Marie**

Chairperson Egyptian Association for community Participation Enhancement

**Ahmed Aly Abdelrahman Elsayed**

Deputy, Court of Cassation

**Ahmed Aly Hassan Aly**

Judge

**Ahmed Iraqi**

Ministry of State for Administrative Development

**Ahmed Mohamed Abdel Al**

Judge

**Ahmed Salah Mohamed Omar**

Judge

**Ahmed Soheim**

Judge

**Alaa Kotb**

High Elections Commission and Constitutional Committee

**Alaa Shalaby**

Senior Researcher, Arab Organization for Human Rights

**Ali El-Newehi**

State Information Service

**Ali El Sawi**

Professor of Political Science - Cairo University

**Aly Erfan**

High Elections Commission

**Amal Abdel Hady**

New Women Foundation

**Amal Ammar**

Cairo Economic Court

**Amany Aboul Fadl**

Freedom and Justice Party

**Amany Kandil**

Executive Director, Arab Network for NGOs

**Amina Shafik**

Journalist and Activist

**Amr Agamawy**

Former head of Information Decision Support Center

**Amr Hashem Rabea**

Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies

**Amr Solimane**

French Institute

**Anissa Hassouna**

Enlightened Egypt

**Arab Lotfy**

Director and Film Maker

**Ashgan Farag**

Country Director - Karama NGO

**Ashraf Abdelwahab**

Former Minister, Ministry of State for Administrative Development

**Asmaa Fawzi**

National Council for Human Rights

**Ayman Fouad Ramadan**

Judge

**Ayman Shehata**

Advisory Committee to the President

**Ayman Walash**

State Information Service

**Azza Kamel**

Executive Director of Appropriate Communication techniques for development

**Azza Soliman**

Centre for Egyptian Women's Legal Assistance

**Bahaa El Din Hasan**

Director, Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies

**Diaa Rashwan**

Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies

**Essam Gad El Karim Mohamed**

Judge

**Fatma Khafagy**

Gender Expert

**Gamal Gheitas**

Editor in Chief - Journalist

**Ghada El-Shahawy**

Judge Cairo Economic Court remove reference to the court

**Ghada Shahbender**

Egyptian Organization for Human Rights

**Gehan El Batouty**

Ministry of Justice

**Ghada Waly**

General Director – Social Fund for Development

**Hafez Abu Seada**

Head, Egyptian Organization for Human Rights



**Hala Yousry**

Professor - Desert Research Centre – American University in Cairo

**Hana Abou ElGhar**

Egyptian Social Democratic Party

**Hanan Dahroug**

Judge

**Hany Mahmoud**

Minister of Communications and Information Technology

**Hatem Bagato**

Secretary General, Presidential Elections Commission Secretariat

**Hatem Mostafa**

Judge

**Heba Morayef**

Human Rights Watch

**Hesham Mokhtar**

Judge, HEC Technical Unit

**Hoda Badran**

Chairperson, Alliance for Arab Women

**Hoda El Tahawy**

Director of Gender & Development

**Hoda Ghaneya**

Freedom and Justice Party

**Iman Bibars**

Director, Association for Women's Rights in Development

**Iman Darwish**

Alliance for Arab Women

**Inas Abou Youssef**

Professor, Faculty of Media, Cairo University

**Inas MekKawy**

League of Arab States / Baheya Ya Masr Founder

**Ismail Khairat**

Former head of State Information Service

**Kamel Bayoumi**

Ministry of Interior

**Karima Kamal**

Al Masry Al Youm

**Kawthar El Kholy**

MADA for Media Development

**Khaled Ahmed Mahmoud Mohamed**

Judge

**Khaled Al-Qazzaz**

Advisory Committee to the President

**Laila Iskandar**

Chairperson, CID Consulting

**Laila Rizgallah**

Not Guilty for Family Development

**Lamia El Sadek**

Advisory Committee to the President

**Magda El Neweishy**

Member of Parliament (2011/2012)

**Magdi Abdelhamid**

Head, Egyptian Association for Community Participation Enhancement

**Maged Osman**

Director BASEERA

**Mahmoud Kareem**

National Council for Human Rights

**Maha Fathy**

State Information Service

**Mai Mahmoud**

Advisory Committee to the President

**Malak Rouchdy**

Middle East Studies Centre – American University in Cairo

**Magdy Abdelbary**

Judge, High Elections Commission

**Manar El-Shorbagy**

Professor of Political Science, American University in Cairo

**Margerette Azer**

Member of Parliament (2011/2012)

**Marianne Malak**

Member of Parliament (2011/2012)

**Marwa Farouq**

Advisory Committee to the President

**Marwa Sharaf El Din**

Activist

**Mervat El Tallawy**

President of National Council for Women

**Mohamed Anwar El Sadat**

Member of Parliament (2011/2012)

**Mohamed Batran**

Ministry of Justice

**Mohamed Hassan El Shennawy**

Judge

**Mohamed Momtaz Metwally**

Judge , and former member of High Elections Commission

**Mohamed Mosaad Diab**

Judge

**Mohamed Rami**

Judge, Presidential Elections Commission Secretariat

**Mohamed Naguib**

Assistant Minister for Civil Affairs, Ministry of Interior

**Mohamed Samir El Essawy**

Judge

**Mohsen Abdel-Aal**

Civil Affairs Sector, Ministry of Interior

**Mohsen Awad**

Secretary-General, Arab Organization for Human Rights

**Mona Aboul Ghar**

Egyptian Social Democratic Party

**Mona Ezzat**

New Women Foundation

**Mona Makaram Ebeid**

National Council for Human Rights

**Mona Mounir**

The Free Egyptians Party

**Mona Zulfaqar**  
Lawyer

**Mozn Hassan**  
Director, Nazra for Feminist Studies

**Nadia Adel Taher**  
University College London

**Namira Negm**  
Professor of Political Science, American University in Cairo/former diplomat)

**Nawara Belal**  
Nazra Initiatives Coordinator

**Nawla Darwish**  
New Women Foundation

**Nehad Abu El Kumsan**  
Director the Egyptian Center for Women's Rights

**Nermeen Mohammed**  
Advisory Committee to the President

**Nevine Mosaad**  
Professor of Political Science - Cairo University

**Omar Abu Eish**  
Ambassador, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**Raghda El Ebrashi**  
Founder and Chairperson - Alashanek ya Baladi

**Reda Mohamed Ahmed El Essawy**  
Judiciary

**Reda Shukir Shehab**  
Al Shehab Foundation for Comprehensive Development

**Saleh Abdelsalam**

Judge, High Elections Commission

**Safaa Zaki Morad**

Political Party Member

**Sahar Ammar**

Information Decision Support center

**Sahar El Tawila**

Social Contract Center

**Salah Shehata**

Information Decision Support center

**Saleh Ahmed El Sheikh**

Public Administration and Research Center - Cairo University

**Sally Mahdi**

Professor, British University in Egypt

**Salma Nagy**

Masr Alhureyya Party

**Samah Fathy**

National Council for Human Rights

**Sameh Al-Shawarby**

Judge

**Samir AbulMaaty**

Chairman of High Elections Commission

**Sanaa El Said**

Member of Parliament (2011/2012)

**Sara Adly**

Judge, Presidential Elections Commission Secretariat

**Sayed Maher**

Head of Electoral Unit, Ministry of Interior

**Seheir Kansouh Habib**

Consultant - Development Policies and Gender

**Shahir Ishak**

Activist

**Shaza Abdel Latif**

Activist

**Sherif Fahmy**

Ministry of State for Administrative Development

**Sobhi Saleh**

Former Member of Parliament

**Soha Abdel-Aaty**

Codirector, Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights

**Soliman Gouda**

Opinion Leader

**Suzy Nashed**

Professor of Law, Alexandria University and former Member of Parliament

**Tamer Faried**

Judge, Cairo Economic Court

**Tarek Abdelkader**

Judge, Presidential Elections Commission Secretariat

**Taher Abdelmohsen**

Member, Constitutional Committee

**Tarek Shebl**

Judge, Presidential Elections Commission Secretariat

**Wael Abdel Moaty Metwally Hussein**

Judge

**Yara Sallam**

Nazra for Feminist Studies

***Yehia Saad***

Nazra for Feminist Studies

**Yousri Abdelkarim**

Former head of technical unit at High Elections Commission

**Yousri Al-Azabawi**

Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies

**Ziyad Bahaa El Din**

Member of Parliament (2011/2012)

**UNDP Staff Egypt**

**Ada Fishta**

**Ahmed Zenari**

**Ali Abdul Jaber**

**Annetta Flanigan**

**Carlos Valenzuela**

**Isabel Otero**

**Marwa Othman**

**Mounir Tabet**

**Naglaa Arafa**



**Nahla Zeitoun**

**Ramona Canaan**

**Sama Eissa**

**Sara El-Demerdash**

**Wessam Mohamed**

## **UN WOMEN EGYPT**

**Ameera El Nager**

**Amina Abdel Aziz**

**Hoda Sharkawi**

**Maha Rateb**

**Maya Morsy**

**Noha Ahmed Helmy Saad Zaghloul**

**Nora Ahmed Abdel Wahed Rafea**

**Rana Korayem**

**Samiha Abou Steit**

## **UN Electoral Assistance Division (Department of Political Affairs, New York)**

**Mansour Sadeghi**

## **Tunisia**

### **Abdessalam Lachaal**

Ministère chargé des rapports avec l'Assemblée Nationale Constituante (ANC)

### **Balkis Mechri**

LTDH -Ligue des droits de l'homme (Human rights commission)

### **Fadhel Moussa**

Assemblée Nationale Constituante, ANC

### **Faouzi Jrad**

Hannibal

### **Hanene Ferjani**

Radio culturelle

### **Hanene Sassi**

Assemblée Nationale Constituante ANC

### **Hasna Marsit**

Assemblée Nationale Constituante ANC

### **Imène Zahouani**

Ministère de la femme et de la famille

### **Kais Mnasri**

Thala solidaire et LET Ligue des Electrices Tunisiennes

### **Kalthoum Badreddine**

Assemblée Nationale Constituante ANC

### **Mariem Ben Salem**

Center of Arab Woman for Training and Research CAWTAR

### **Monia Al Abed**

Instance Supérieure Indépendant pour les Élections ISIE

**Mounir Snoussi**

La haute instance pour la réalisation des Objectifs de la Révolution et des Réformes Politiques,  
HIRORRP

**Najla Bouriel**

Assemblée Nationale Constituante ANC

**Najla Brahem**

Instance Régionale Indépendante pour les Élections IRIE

**Said Khezami**

watanya1

**Samir Cheffi**

Union générale Tunisienne du travail UGTT

**Sofiène Ben Farhat Réda**

chef La Presse, Shems et Tounsia

**Yamina Zoghlami**

ANC

**Omar Boubakri**

UNDP

**Anis Zahraz**

UNDP

**Costanza Lucangeli**

UNDP

**Dorra Chaouachi**

UNDP

**Emna Zghonda**

UNDP

**Soulef Gassoum**

UNDP

**Vincent da Cruz**

UNDP

## **Libya**

**Amal Ballu**

Libya civil society

**Amina Almagheirbi**

Elected General National Council (GNC) member (Chair Human Rights Committee)

**Ashjan Musa**

Candidate to GNC- not elected- active in electoral process

**Assmaa Omara Suraib**

GNC member (& member of GNC Media & CSO Committee)

**Eman Ewidat Abdulla**

Candidate to GNC- not elected- active in electoral process

**Entesar Bonzareba**

CSO org

**Fatima Alabasi**

Elected GNC member

**Ghazala Mohamed**

Candidate to GNC- not elected- active in electoral process

**Hala Musbah**

Candidate to GNC- not elected- active in electoral process

**Halouma Alfalah**

CSO/Tawasul ('Connecting Youth Children & Women in Libya')

**Hiba Khalil**

One Libya

**Hind Azzouz**

High National Election Commission

**Lutfia Tabib**

Libya civil society

**Majda Alfalah**

Elected GNC member (HR + Health committees)

**Mariem Abo Ghrara**

Candidate to GNC- not elected- active in electoral process

**Abdamonehem Lohashi**

Elected GNC member

**Akrem Jinin**

Elected GNC member

**Nadine Mohamed Nasrat**

CSO/Committee to Support Women's Participation in Decision-Making

**Radia Al Midan**

HNEC

**Rida Al Tuluby**

CSO/ Maan Naheba-Together We Build

**Salwa Hamme**

CSO/Committee to Support Women's Participation in Decision-Making

**Samira Mohamed Al-Hadad**

Libya civil society

**Shahrazad Maghrabi**

CSO/Libyan Women's Forum

**Turkia Alwaer**

Candidate to GNC- not elected -active in electoral process

**Wafa Bugaighis**

CSO/Committee to Support Women's Participation in Decision-Making

**Zahia Atia**

Candidate to GNC- not elected- active in electoral process

**Zainab Abo Kassam Abdulla Bayyou**

Elected GNC member

**Zainab Alsharif**

Candidate to GNC- not elected- active in electoral process

**Albertina Piterberg**

UNSMIL

**Andrea Cullinan**

UNSMIL

**Annan Sorri**

UNSMIL

**Panto Letic**

UNSMIL

**Ruth Mayer**

UNSMIL

**Safa Osman**

UNSMIL











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Cairo, 9-10 December 2012

