

Women's Socio-Economic Empowerment:

Projects for Progress

Barcelona · March 26-27, 2014



Union pour la Méditerranée
Union for the Mediterranean
الإتحاد من أجل المتوسط

BACKGROUND

Ministers in charge of gender issues from the Union for the Mediterranean Member States adopted at the Third Ministerial Conference on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society, held on 11-12 September 2013 in Paris, conclusions related to the economic, social and political rights of the women of the Euro-Mediterranean in the following three areas:

- Equal rights of women and men to participate in the political, economic, civil and social life;
- Fight against all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls;
- Change in attitude and behaviour to attain gender equality with a view to promote women empowerment not only in rights but also in reality.

The Ministers have asked the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean to identify and facilitate the development, launch and funding of projects, and to organize a project-oriented international conference "Women Socio-Economic Empowerment: Projects for Progress". This international Conference takes place in Barcelona on 26-27 March 2014.

OBJECTIVES

The major goal of the Conference is to create a strong momentum for the women socio-economic empowerment in the region, by interlinking policy decisions as provided by the Ministerial declaration, mainstreamed development programs and projects on the ground. The Conference will aim at establishing a lasting cooperation platform as an effective contribution of the Union for the Mediterranean to the region's women empowerment agenda and to the mainstreaming of gender issues in the development of inclusive and sustainable economies.

More specifically, this Conference will aim at:

1. Developing stronger synergies and coherence among women-related initiatives and advancing the women socio-economic empowerment agenda, all in the light of common regional priorities;
2. Fostering projects, initiatives and programs with a regional dimension and eliminating possible bottlenecks;
3. Identifying sources of funding for the labeled projects, initiatives and programs.

Media Partner:



The UfM Secretariat
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EXPECTED RESULTS

The main expected results of the conference are as follow:

- From an institutional and policy stand point:
 - ❖ Establish strengthening the role of women at the heart of all progress and development in the Mediterranean
 - ❖ Enhance (Reinforce) the political and technical dialogue on the best practices for promoting gender equality in the Mediterranean
 - ❖ Foster the formation of partnerships and the creation of networks between the various actors of the North and the South: government, civil society, multilateral organisations, and the private sector.
- From an project-related stand point:
 - ❖ Create enhanced synergies and reinforce coherence between initiatives
 - ❖ Identify new structural programmes and regional projects to be carried out
- From a financial point of view:
 - ❖ Better identify the sources of funding
 - ❖ Bring the donors and project promoters closer in order to establish partnerships

PARTICIPANTS

The two-day conference will gather representatives of major public and private stakeholders involved in women socio-economic empowerment issues and project promoters interested and capable of delivering concrete projects on the ground for the benefit of the region's girls and women.

AGENDA AND ORGANISATION

Each session would be conceived in a multistakeholder perspective, including public authorities, bilateral and multilateral agencies and institutions from the region and beyond, the private sector and representatives of civil society and the non-governmental sector.

The first day will include a series of strategy, policy and resource-oriented discussions while keeping a strong focus on operational aspects.

- The first session will focus on identifying major needs and potentials, obstacles to be overcome and opportunities to be seized.
- The second session would highlight priorities, strategies and ways of advancing socio-economic empowerment agenda via projects, initiatives and programs. It will be divided in two sessions, the first one will focus on public programmes and policies, and the second one will focus on the private sector programmes.

The second day will be divided in workshops which will give prominence to project promoters who will explore potential for synergy and coordination between different initiatives as well as the need for new and larger initiatives to be taken. The following subjects will be discussed:

- improving the value chain (handcraft, sustainable tourism and income generating activities)
- facilitating transition from education to work (vocational training, education, employment)
- improving women's access to decision-making positions (entrepreneurship, leadership and mentoring)

This conference will include the presentation of new projects and those entering a second phase of implementation. Funding cooperation agreements will be signed. The premises will also offer facilitation for B to B meetings.

Through this conference and the process which it will allow to launch, the Secretariat of the UfM will be fully exerting its role as a platform for the creation of regional partnerships and of networking for the different stakeholders of the Mediterranean, and for the promotion of efficient regional projects in the Mediterranean.

26th March

Priority Operational Policies, Initiatives and Programmes

08:00-09:00 *Registration and Welcome Coffee*

09:00-09:45 OFFICIAL OPENING AND PRESENTATION OF THE CONFERENCE

Plenary Room

- **Mr. Fathallah SIJILMASSI**, Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)
- **H.E. Reem ABU HASSAN**, Minister of Social Development of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
- **H.E. Ana MATO**, Minister of Health, Social Services and Equality of the Kingdom of Spain
- Video Message by **H.E. Najat VALLAUD-BELKACEM**, Minister of Women Rights, Spokesperson of the Government of the French Republic
- **Mr. Patrice BERGAMINI**, Head of the Regional Policies for Southern Mediterranean Division, European External Action Service
- **Ms. Delphine BORIONE**, Deputy Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean

09:45-11:15 UFM FORWARD: PROJECTS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Moderator: Ms. Delphine BORIONE, Deputy Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean

Plenary Room

I) UFM LABELLED PROJECTS:

- 1) Update on the project **Young Women as Job Creators**, promoted by AFAEMME (Association of Organisations of Mediterranean Businesswomen)
 - **Ms. Maria Helena DE FELIPE LEHTONEN**, President of AFAEMME
 - Testimony of **Ms. Luma SUKARIEH**, winner of the **UfM-AFAEMME Award *Young Women as Job Creators***
- 2) Update on the project **Developing Women Empowerment**
 - **Ms. Fouzia ASSOULI**, President of the Foundation of the Women of the Euro-Mediterranean, and the Federation of Democratic League of Women's Rights, Morocco
- 3) Official launch of the project **Skills for Success**, promoted by AMIDEAST (America-MidEast Educational and Training Services)
 - **Mr. Arne GJERMUNDSEN**, Coordinator for Africa, Section of Middle East and North Africa, Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
 - **Mr. Yves WANTENS**, Head of the Diplomatic Flemish Office in Spain, Embassy of Belgium
 - **Ms. Helena SIMAS**, Regional Director, AMIDEAST

II) PARTNERSHIPS:

- Agreement between the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean and the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Agreement between the Secretariat of the UfM, the Flemish Department of Foreign Affairs and AMIDEAST

11:15-11.45 *Coffee Break - In parallel: Media Point at Library Room*

11.45-13:30 SESSION 1: MAJOR NEEDS AND CHALLENGES FOR ADVANCING WOMEN AGENDA IN THE EURO-MEDITERRANEAN REGION

Plenary Room

Moderator: Ms. Virginie HERZ, France Médias Monde

- **Ms. Samira MERAI-FRIAA**, President of the Women's Rights Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the UfM and Member of National Constituent Assembly, Tunisia
- **Ms. Leila RHIWI**, Representative of the Maghreb Office of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)
- **Ms. Inas MEKKAWY**, Head of Women, Family and Childhood Department, Arab League
- **Ms. Soukeina BOURAOUI**, Executive Director of the Center of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR)
- **Ms. Katarina BLOMQVIST**, Acting Head of MENA Department of the Danish Centre for Information on Gender, Equality and Diversity (KVINFO)
- **Ms. Saida DRISSI AMRANI**, Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network

Women empowerment and socio-economic development are closely related. To analyze the situation of women empowerment in the Mediterranean region, this session will present main facts and figures related to women's socio-economic situation and will identify major barriers and challenges that women are facing in the region. Opportunities seized during last years for advancing women's empowerment agenda will be presented, including an enhanced socio-economic participation in the public and private sectors, and in the decision-making processes.

Questions:

- How does the empowerment of women benefit economic development?
- What are the major remaining challenges?
- Are there any new regional opportunities?

Open Discussion

13.30-15.00 *Buffet Lunch*

15:00-17.30 SESSION 2: PRIORITY INITIATIVES, PROGRAMMES AND FUNDING: FOSTERING SYNERGIES AND SUPPORT - LESSONS LEARNED AND WAY FORWARD (Consecutive Sessions)

Plenary Room

A. PUBLIC POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Moderator: Ms. Tatiana MASSAAD, France Médias Monde

- **Mr. Larbi TABIT**, Secretary General, Ministry of Solidarity of Women, Family and Social Development, Morocco
- **Mr. Jean-Louis VILLE**, Head of Unit, Governance, Democracy, Gender, Human Rights (DG DEVCO), European Commission
- **Ms. Zdenka LONČAR**, Assistant Minister, Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Crafts, Croatia
- **Ms. Effat ELSHOUKI**, Projects and Development Expert, Women Business Development Centre, Egypt

Creating an environment for sustainable and inclusive economic growth, building good governance and mainstreaming gender into public policies are key conditions for improving the situation of women. Participants will present experiences of public policy programs and initiatives which have created opportunities and improved the socio-economic participation of women.

- **Ms. Esse NILSSON**, Senior Programme Manager, Unit for MENA region of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), Sweden
- **Ms. Radhia BENHAJ ZEKRI**, Euro-Med Non-Governmental Platform

Open Discussion

B. PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

Moderator: Ms. Annette YOUNG, France Médias Monde

- **Ms. Amal DARAGHMEH MASRI**, Founder of the Business Woman Forum, Palestine
- **Ms. Grace ATTARD**, European Economic and Social Council
- **Ms. Souad AZAROUAL**, Director of Partnerships, OCP Foundation, Morocco
- **Ms. Fatima Zahra OUKACHA**, Director, Center for Entrepreneurship and Executive Development, Morocco
- **Mr. Salvatore NIGRO**, Chief Executive Officer Europe, Education for Employment (EFE)

Open Discussion

17.30-18.00 SUMMARY WRAP-UP SESSION

Rapporteurs of the previous sessions

Free Evening

Questions:

- Which public development programs contribute to tangible impact on the ground?
- Are they potentially replicable to other countries?
- What are the major areas to be improved in order to increase women's participation?
- How can synergies between local, national, and international programs and initiatives be strengthened?

Empowering women to participate fully in economic life across all sectors, financing women business development and fostering women's employment are all crucial for building stronger economies. Participants will highlight in this session how the private sector can be a key partner to advance gender equality and empower women. Successful experiences and possible synergies for improving the efficiency of private sector contribution will also be emphasized.

Questions:

- How to invest in women's business education and to overcome barriers in traditionally male-oriented industries?
- How to increase women's access to finance and microfinance?
- What type of employment opportunities can be created by social economy?
- How can new technologies help promote women's employment?
- Can we achieve a better regional efficiency and coherence between private initiatives and programmes?

27th March

Projects for Progress

09:00-11:30 SESSION 3: STRENGTHENING SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BY ADDRESSING KEY CHALLENGES AND EXCHANGING EXPERIENCES
(Three parallel sessions)

A. IMPROVING THE VALUE CHAIN (Handicraft, sustainable tourism and income-generating activities)

Library Room

Introductory remarks and moderation: Mr. Gerardo PATACCONI, Chief, Cluster and Business Linkages, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

Value Creation has a transformative impact across sectors and economies. With regard to handicraft, as a main focus of this session and as a sector with traditionally much women involvement, there is often a need to adapt the design and quality of the products, to foster marketing and trade capacities, and to create distribution networks. Enhancement of the productivity in the value chain can bring not only more income for all the people concerned (in particular grass root women groups) but also greater benefits for the whole economy. Opportunities raised by information technologies in this regard will also be highlighted.

- **Ms. Nele WASMUTH**, MENA Programme Coordinator, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Germany
- **Ms. Nathalie PILHES**, Interdepartmental Delegation for the Mediterranean (DIMED), France
- **Ms. Mary Ann RUKAVINA CIPETIĆ**, Executive Director, Gender Task Force, Croatia
- **Ms. Fatma BEN NOUR**, Head of Training, Tunisian Hotel Federation, Tunisia
- **Ms. Flutura XHABIJA**, President, Professional Business and Handicraft Women Association, Albania

Questions:

- How can this sector be more innovative, better structured and better diversified?
- What can be done to promote women's socio-economic empowerment through handicraft and other income generating activities?
- What actions can be carried out at the local and regional level?

Open Discussion

B. FACILITATING TRANSITION FROM EDUCATION TO WORK (Vocational training, education, employment)

Music Room

Introductory Remarks and Moderation: Ms. Outi KARKKAINEN, Specialist in VET and Gender - Country Manager of the European Training Foundation (ETF)

- Ms. Emanuela POZZAN, Senior Gender Specialist for the Arab States, International Labour Organisation (ILO)
- Ms. Marie Pierre NICOLLET, Director, Mediterranean and the Middle East Section, Agence française de développement (AFD), France
- Ms. Samia GHORMEL EL ADAB, Member of Executive Bureau, Tunisian National Chamber of Businesswomen
- Ms. Tima KHALIL, Journalist and Filmmaker Positive Change Productions & Mentor, BBC Media Action

Open Discussion

C. IMPROVING WOMEN'S ACCESS TO DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS (Entrepreneurship, leadership and mentoring)

Introductory remarks and moderation: Ms. Nicola EHLERMANN-CACHE, Acting Head MENA-OECD Investment Programme OECD Global Relations Secretariat, Private Sector Development Division (OECD)

- Ms. Maryse GUIMOND, Programme Manager, Arab States Office of the U.N Entity for Gender Equality and Women Empowerment (UN Women)
- Mr. Fatih Feramuz YILDIZ, Head of Economic Status Department, General Directorate of the Status of Women, Turkey
- Ms. Vered PEAR SWID, General Director, High Authority for the Advancement of Women, Israel
- Ms. Ilham ZHIRI, President, Moroccan Women Mentoring/Networking, Morocco
- Ms. Annika TÖRNQVIST, Head of Development Cooperation, Kvinna till Kvinna, Sweden
- Ms. Lamis KHALILOVA BARTUSKOVA, Senior Programme Officer, German Marshall Fund of the United States, United States of America

While education of girls has increased recently, women employability remains very low (an average of 23% in the Mena region). Women empowerment, as well as youth employability, could be significantly increased by reducing the existing skills mismatch between education/training and labour market demand. To achieve this goal, strong efforts must be made to foster concrete collaboration between universities, vocational training schools and employers (promotion of internships, study cases, career centers).

Questions:

- How can universities and the private sector jointly work on women's integration in the labor market after schooling?
- What can be done to support young educated women in developing and achieving entrepreneurial goals?
- How can we contribute to the emergence of a skilled women labor force?

Plenary Room

Women's access to all decision-making positions is still very limited. To improve this situation, there is a need to involve committed and empowered women and to provide them with professional and personal skills in social, economic, political and cultural aspects. Women's socio-economic empowerment provides them with a major role in society, while their larger representation in all walks of the region's public life will foster society's cohesion.

Questions:

- What to undertake to have more women in leadership positions and the decision-making processes?
- How can the education and the media improve the society's perception of women's potential in the region's overall development?
- How can gender mainstreaming make the Mediterranean a more dynamic, modern and prosperous region?

Open Discussion

11:30-11:45 Coffee break

11:45-13:15 CONCLUSIONS AND WAY FORWARD

Plenary Room

Moderator: Ms. Delphine BORIONE, Deputy Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean

Rapporteurs of the previous sessions

- **Ms. Tamara VONTA**, State Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister, Slovenia
- **Ms. Cristina GALLACH**, Head of Public Relations, Council of the European Union
- **Ms. Neila CHAABANE**, Secretary of State in charge of Women and Family Affairs, Tunisia

13:15-14:30 Networking lunch

On the margins of the entire Conference rooms for networking will be available.

ufmsecretariat.org/women-empowerment-conference

#ufmwomenconf

SUBMISSION OF PROJECTS

In an effort to successfully prepare the conference and to secure its concrete, tangible outcome, the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean invites all interested stakeholders dealing with socio-economic empowerment of women to submit concrete regional project proposals for appraisal (<http://ufmsecretariat.org/how-to-submit-a-project>). Proposals will be assessed following the Union for the Mediterranean project criteria and brought to the attention of the Conference's participants, namely possible donors and project partners. Those which meet all the necessary requirements would be assessed for possible labelling by the Union for the Mediterranean Member States.

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