



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

Visions and actions to promote gender equality in the Mediterranean



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Foreword

- Fathallah Sijilmassi, Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean

Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but is today a significant marker of development in our societies. It is widely recognised that women empowerment is a precondition for prosperous, stable and sustainable societies as strong evidence shows that improving gender equality can enhance productivity and improve the performance of businesses and institutions.

Therefore, achieving gender equality is a fundamental contribution to address the pressing challenges we are facing today at global level.

In the Euro-Mediterranean region, significant progress has been made over the past years in closing gaps between men and women. In many countries, there are more women attending universities than men, and there are also positive trends in women's participation in the economic, political, civil, social and cultural spheres of life.

However, gender equality remains a key issue in the region. The educational gains achieved by women are yet to translate into concrete results in terms of greater empowerment and equal perspectives. Such persistent inequalities incur high costs for the region and hamper the ability for sustainable economic growth and good governance.

More and continued efforts are therefore needed, by all stakeholders, to address these challenges. This is why the Union for the Mediterranean has put women empowerment at the heart of its strategic priorities for the enhancement of regional cooperation in the Mediterranean. Mandated by the Ministers of its 43 Member States, notably through the Ministerial Declarations of Istanbul, Marrakech, Paris and now Cairo, the UfM has been actively setting a regional, structured and inclusive agenda to promote women's economic, social and political rights in the region in close cooperation with all regional stakeholders through three dimensions-political fora, policy dialogues and projects.

These three levels of action acknowledge the key importance of expanding and reinforcing collective efforts and complementarities. The UfM is thus determined to consolidate its role as a regional multi-stakeholder platform for all Euro-Mediterranean actors to foster synergies in the field of women empowerment, as it is in a unique position to facilitate regional dialogue and strategic partnerships in the region.

The present publication echoes this call and invites to continue promoting a strong shared



regional agenda, towards the enhancement of the untapped potential of our region, above all the role of women as major driving forces for change and development in all societies.

The UfM Ministers of Foreign Affairs adopted a Roadmap for Action in January 2017, at the occasion of the II Regional Forum of the UfM in Barcelona, giving a clear political impulse for the enhancement of regional co-operation efforts in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

We must ensure this political momentum continues to be translated into concrete actions for the benefit and the well-being of the citizens of our region. The UfM Secretariat is fully committed with all its partners in this sense, to achieve our common goals for a more stable, integrated and prosperous Euro-Mediterranean.



Women Empowerment, a crucial factor for achieving peace and stability

- Mariano Rajoy , President of the Government of Spain

La IV conferencia ministerial de la Unión por el Mediterráneo sobre el fortalecimiento del rol de la mujer en la sociedad es un momento único para que las y los líderes de los 43 países que la conformamos demos un paso decisivo en el empoderamiento real y efectivo de las mujeres como prioridad política, no solo por ser un derecho fundamental, sino también por el papel que puede desempeñar como garante de paz, estabilidad y prosperidad. La Conferencia puede dar garantía del adecuado cumplimiento de los compromisos adquiridos en la Reunión Ministerial de París celebrada en 2013, que culminó un proceso iniciado ya con la Declaración de Barcelona en 1995, y especialmente en las reuniones Ministeriales de Estambul en 2006 y de Marrakech en 2009.

A España, país ribereño del Mediterráneo, le unen innumerables vínculos histórico-culturales, sociales y comerciales con la región mediterránea.

Además de las relaciones como miembro de la Unión Europea, España mantiene estrechas relaciones bilaterales con los países de la Región, con los que trabajamos en conformar una verdadera comunidad.

En España tenemos el firme compromiso de trabajar, tanto a nivel nacional como internacional, en la prevención y la lucha contra todas las formas de discriminación hacia las mujeres, así como en la consecución de la efectiva igualdad de trato y oportunidades entre mujeres y hombres. Queremos que todos puedan ejercer plenamente sus derechos, y aportar todo su talento y capacidad para su desarrollo personal y profesional en beneficio del conjunto de la sociedad. Trabajamos con firmeza en la erradicación de todas las formas de violencia sobre la mujer, especialmente de la violencia de género como manifestación extrema de la desigualdad.

The 4th Union for the Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society is a unique opportunity for the leaders of the 43 UfM member countries to take a decisive step to make real and effective empowerment of women as a political priority, not only because it is a fundamental right but also because of the role women can play as a guarantor of peace, stability and prosperity. The Conference can ensure proper fulfilment of the commitments taken at the Paris Ministerial Meeting held in 2013, which culminated a process that began with the Barcelona Declaration in 1995, and especially at the Ministerial meetings in Istanbul in 2006 and in Marrakesh in 2009.

Spain, as a Mediterranean country, is bound to the Mediterranean region by countless historical, cultural, social and trading ties. In addition its status as a member of the European Union, Spain maintains close bilateral relations with the countries in the Region with which we work to create a real community.

In Spain, we are firmly committed to work nationally and internationally to prevent and fight against all kinds of discrimination against women and also to achieve effective equality of treatment and opportunities between men and women. We want everyone to be able to fully exercise their rights and contribute by their talent and ability for their personal and professional development for the benefit of society as a whole. We are determined to eradicate all forms of violence against women, especially gender-based violence as an extreme expression of inequality.

Spain has today a comprehensive regulatory and policy framework translated in strategic plans for equal opportunities which guarantee effective equality of treatment and opportunities between men and women. This gives further grounds and interest for Spain to work and cooperate with Southern Mediterranean countries to build effective gender equality and to achieve stability, as evidenced by our active involvement in the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Regional Dialogue.



España cuenta hoy con un completo marco normativo y con políticas, expresadas en planes estratégicos de igualdad de oportunidades, que garantizan la efectiva igualdad de trato y de oportunidades entre mujeres y hombres. Motivos todos ellos, que justifican aún más, el interés de España por trabajar y cooperar para el desarrollo de la igualdad real entre mujeres y hombres y para la consecución de una estabilidad con los países del Sur del Mediterráneo, tal y como demuestra nuestra implicación activa en el Diálogo Regional de la Unión por el Mediterráneo (UpM).

A partir de los compromisos adoptados en Declaración de París en 2013 en materia de empoderamiento de la mujer en la sociedad, la UpM ha ido manteniendo numerosas reuniones con personas expertas de los países miembros para analizar la implantación de dichos compromisos y constatar la evolución de la situación de las

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Based on the commitments adopted in the Paris Declaration in 2013 on strengthening the role of women in society, the UfM has held numerous meetings with experts from member countries to examine the implementation of these commitments and ascertain how the situation of women is evolving. However, despite the progress achieved in some countries in the North and South of the Mediterranean, there is still significant gender inequality. This includes inequalities in the participation of women in public life (economic, social, etc.), the high rates of violence against women and girls, and inequalities that affect women in vulnerable situations such as migrants and/or refugees, women with disabilities, etc. This shows that in all countries we need to intensify our engagement in implementing and monitoring these commitments. There are still challenges to be met and many miles to go.

The transformations seen across the Mediterranean, the political instability and the issue of security in some areas of the Mediterranean, together with

Mariano Rajoy Brey is the current President of the Government of Spain and President of the ruling Partido Popular (PP). He studied law at the University of Santiago de Compostela and began his political career as a member of the Galician Parliament

After the election of José María Aznar as President of the PP, he was named Deputy Secretary General. From 1996-99 Rajoy served as Minister for Public Administration, and from 1999-2000 he served as Minister of Education and Culture.

After coordinating the campaign for the PP's victory in the 2000 General Election, Rajoy was promoted to First Vice President of the Government. In 2001 he became Minister of the Interior before returning to his role as Minister of the Presidency and Government Spokesman in 2002.

Rajoy was elected President of the PP by the party's National Congress in 2004 and served as leader of the opposition from 2004 to 2011.

mujeres. Sin embargo, pese al avance de algunos países del Norte y del Sur del Mediterráneo, en otros países persisten importantes desigualdades entre mujeres y hombres. Desigualdades en la participación de las mujeres en la vida pública (económica, social...), en ocasiones altos grados de violencia contra mujeres y niñas, y desigualdades contra aquellas mujeres que se encuentran en situaciones de especial dificultad, como las migrantes y/o refugiadas, las que sufren discapacidad, etc. Lo que demuestra, que todos los países tenemos la necesidad de redoblar nuestra implicación efectiva en la implantación y seguimiento de los mismos. Quedan retos que alcanzar y kilómetros por recorrer.

Las transformaciones experimentadas en el Mediterráneo, la situación de inestabilidad política y la ausencia de seguridad en algunas áreas de la región mediterránea, así como el aumento de inmigrantes y solicitantes de asilo, el nuevo contexto social, económico, político y estratégico, hacen imprescindible, en coherencia con la Estrategia global para la política exterior y de

seguridad de la Unión Europea adoptada el pasado año, que hoy más que nunca, actuemos decisiva y conjuntamente en la promoción de los derechos humanos, las libertades fundamentales y el Estado de Derecho. Esta promoción implica, como no podría ser de otro modo, elementos de justicia, de solidaridad, de igualdad entre mujeres y hombres, de erradicación de la violencia de género, de la no discriminación, del pluralismo y del respeto de la diversidad, como elementos claves para conseguir paz y seguridad para la región.

Debemos hacer todo lo que esté en nuestras manos para construir sociedades integradoras, prósperas y seguras, avanzando en la protección de los derechos humanos y especialmente en la igualdad real y efectiva de mujeres y hombres.

Así, es necesario por un lado trabajar en erradicar la violencia ejercida contra la mujer por el mero hecho de serlo, por otro lado garantizar la participación económica de las mujeres en condiciones de igualdad y su acceso a puestos de toma de

the rise in flows of migrants and asylum seekers, and the new social, economic and strategic context, in line with the Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy adopted last year, make it essential that today more than ever we take decisive joint action to promote human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law. This naturally entails issues in justice, solidarity, gender equality, eradication of gender violence, non-discrimination, pluralism and respect for diversity as key points for achieving peace and security in the region.

We must do everything in our power to build inclusive, prosperous and secure societies by making progress in protecting human rights and especially in achieving real and effective gender equality.

As such, we need to work to eradicate violence

against women resulting from the mere fact of being female. We also have to guarantee women's economic participation under conditions of equality and their access to decision-making positions in all areas while furthering equality in working conditions and reducing segregation in the job market. Finally, we must also make evident their major contribution to sustainable development, economic and inclusive growth, and their potential as key players in the fight against extremism and radicalisation. Women empowerment is therefore crucial in achieving and maintaining peace.

I am convinced that women's empowerment and greater equality between men and women can make a decisive contribution towards stability, peace and security in the region. As such, greater political commitment by all countries to the real and effective implementation of the Paris 2013 commitments is imperative. At the same time, we

decisiones en todos los ámbitos, avanzar en la igualdad en las condiciones de trabajo, fomentando una menor segregación del mercado de trabajo y, finalmente, visibilizar su importante contribución al desarrollo sostenible, al crecimiento económico e integrador, su potencial como agente clave para luchar contra los extremismos y la radicalización, y por tanto, para conseguir y mantener la paz.

Estoy convencido de que el empoderamiento de la mujer y una mayor igualdad entre mujeres y hombres, pueden contribuir decididamente a la estabilidad, paz y seguridad en la región. Por ello, es importante un mayor compromiso político de todos los países en la implementación real y efectiva de los compromisos de París 2013. Al tiempo que reforzamos y mejoramos los mecanismos de gobernanza existentes y las sinergias entre ellos, tales como la UpM, el Instrumento Europeo de Vecindad, y los demás foros e instrumentos internacionales (Convención sobre la Eliminación de toda forma de Discriminación contra la Mujer –CEDAW–, Organización para la Cooperación y el Desarrollo Económicos–OCDE–, etc.), y fomentamos

una mayor participación de la sociedad civil.

Es necesario un Plan de Acción que traduzca a medidas concretas los compromisos ya adquiridos, con mecanismos de seguimiento y evaluación, así como la asignación de los recursos e incentivos adecuados para ponerlos en marcha. Confío en que sepamos estar a la altura de las circunstancias y podamos sentar los cimientos de un Plan de Acción que nos ayude a cumplir los compromisos ya asumidos y a conseguir un mundo más justo e igualitario, donde mujeres y hombres tengan los mismos derechos y oportunidades de desarrollo, en condiciones de paz y seguridad

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have to enhance and improve existing governance mechanisms and the synergies between them, such as the UfM, the European Neighbourhood Instrument ,the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and encourage greater participation of civil society.

An Action Plan is needed which will turn existing commitments into specific measures equipped with monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and allocate appropriate resources and incentives to implement them. I am sure that we will be able to rise to the occasion and lay the foundations for an Action Plan that will help us to meet existing commitments and achieve a more just and egalitarian world where men and women have the same rights and opportunities for development in conditions of peace and security.

Bringing the women of our Mediterranean together: in pursuit of peace, prosperity and wellbeing

- Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, President of Malta

In light of the rapid changes undergoing today's world, our vision for the future of women's empowerment in the Mediterranean region must, first of all, respond to the complex phenomena facing the families and communities of our region.

These include processes of conflict and migration, deep-rooted changes in the demographics of our nations, and new opportunities for the positive transformation of the status quo, which has promoted a one-dimensional attitude towards issues of gender, to the detriment of women and girls.

As the President of Malta, a nation in the centre of the Mediterranean Region, and as a woman, I have had first-hand experiences of these specific challenges, but also of the great resilience and the spirit of courage which women and girls show, each and every day, to improve their lives and the lives of their families.

The 3rd Ministerial Conference on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society, facilitated by the Union for the Mediterranean in 2013, already highlighted the need for our Mediterranean countries to do more, to ensure that the women and girls of the Euro-Mediterranean region are further empowered, in our journey towards achieving meaningful equity, equality, and inclusion.

I believe we must continue to acknowledge the important role women have played in the changes taking place across our region, particularly by encouraging women's fuller participation in the political, economic, cultural and social development of the Euro-Mediterranean.

I am confident that the 2017 Ministerial Conference will further contribute to a positive change in attitude and behaviour, towards women and girls in our region. Above all, I believe we must be united, to strongly condemn all forms of violence and discrimination, particularly on the grounds of gender.

This is especially essential, because women and girls are acutely suffering from the consequences of armed conflict, which is resulting in much higher rates of gender-based violence. Women and girls are rendered vulnerable to poverty and precarity, due to the loss of jobs and a lack of proper educational opportunities and basic shelter.

Mass displacement of people has become the order of the day. **In fact, according to the United Nations Refugee Agency, women comprise nearly half of all refugees worldwide.** Research shows that gender is a major factor, which creates higher risks for women and girls in such situations.

In order to achieve our objective of peace, we must revitalise our global legacy of universal human rights, which is the clearest way to promote inclusive societies. In the inspiring words of Nelson Mandela, "to deny people their human rights is to challenge their very humanity."

We cannot be silent, when the humanity of countless women goes un-respected and unprotected. It is essential that we continue to make an inclusive, rights-based approach our top priority, within our nations and across our Euro-Mediterranean Region, to effectively address these concerns.

Moreover, if we truly wish to achieve meaningful peace and prosperity, then I believe that we cannot only act out of national interest. We must take a region-wide approach. We must understand that the progress of our countries needs to be mirrored by a holistic transformation, felt across the entirety of our Euro-Mediterranean Region.

For this reason, we must be led, in all our endeavours, by the mandate of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda, and its Sustainable Development Goals. Agenda 2030 is a roadmap that brings with it a system of values, which promote respect for human dignity, the pursuit of equity, effective access to democratic participation, and equitable opportunities for prosperity.



In today's climate of uncertainty, when so many challenges are facing us on a constant basis, we cannot afford to be unsure of our objectives to achieve gender equity, equality, and inclusion. We cannot be complacent, when indicators from the World Health Organisation tell us that 1 in 3 women, around the world, are at grave risk of physical or sexual violence.

We cannot be complacent, when data from the World Bank tells us that women around the world are consistently paid less than men, earning on average only 60 to 75 per cent of men's wages, and are therefore at increased risk of precarity.

We cannot be complacent, when the European Commission itself reports that women and girls are at particular risk of trafficking and modern day slavery. Our authorities must take action on behalf of the most vulnerable members of our society, all over the Euro-Mediterranean Region.

It is women and girls, escaping from persecution in their home countries, who are at the most elevated risk of physical, sexual, and psychological violence. Increasing numbers of women, being pushed into precarity, results in the continued, and intergenerational, suffering of entire families and communities.

I believe that our authorities, policy makers, and civil society activists, across the Mediterranean, must act, together, to ensure that such situations are addressed in a timely manner.

I believe that it is our responsibility to call for increased accountability, and more accurate monitoring within the Mediterranean Region, of the ways in which our communities, societies, and nations are working towards on-the-ground improvements, in the lives of women and girls.

We must find ways of uniting the women of the Mediterranean, against these threats. We must encourage them to share their experiences, and use every platform to promote women's participation in the work of peace and wellbeing.

Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, President of Malta, is the youngest serving Head of State and only the second woman to hold this post.

She has been active in national politics for the past forty years, since the age of sixteen. She served as MP in the Maltese Parliament from 1998 to 2014.

As an Opposition MP, Coleiro Preca served as Shadow Minister for Social Policy, Shadow Minister for Tourism, Shadow Minister for Health and also as member of the Parliamentary Permanent Committee for Social Affairs and another for the Family Affairs.

On 2013 Coleiro Preca was appointed Minister for the Family and Social Solidarity and she started working on a single-means testing mechanism and on a welfare reform. She also introduced an effective system against benefit fraud.

In January 2014, together with the Prime Minister of Malta, Coleiro Preca launched a Green Paper: A Framework for Poverty Reduction and for Social Inclusion. Furthermore, she introduced a number of measures to address poverty including a child supplement aimed at 22,000 children at risk of poverty.

We must do more to listen to what women and girls have to say, and then take action to address their experiences. I urge all stakeholders, involved in this conference, to prioritise the needs and requirements of all local communities. We must highlight a bottom-up approach, which puts the individual and community at the centre of all our strategies.

Let us find ways of bringing the women of our Mediterranean together, especially those who have managed to achieve tangible changes within their communities. Strategies for sharing and mutual learning are crucial, to address issues of prosperity.

Let us be united, in pursuit of peace, prosperity, and wellbeing. Let us work together to create a Mediterranean legacy of universal human rights and fundamental freedoms, thereby safeguarding equity and dignity for each and every member of our human family.

Women's rights are human rights

- Mariya Gabriel, European Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society

Gender equality is at the core of European values, enshrined within the European Union's legal and political framework. Women's rights are human rights and human rights are women's rights. In the Mediterranean region, the Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy in 2015 has put a special focus on gender equality, in particular through women's economic empowerment and enhanced regional cooperation in partner countries in the field of the rule of law and good governance, working side by side with civil societies in the Southern Neighbourhood.

The Global strategy, adopted in June 2016, has established an even more joined up approach, between EU institutions and the EU's Member States, ensuring that human rights and gender issues are systematically mainstreamed across the EU's internal and external policies. With the adoption of the EU Gender Action Plan 2016-2020, the EU has taken forward the promotion of gender equality in all its external actions, providing its partners with the support they need to work towards the protection and fulfilment and enjoyment of human rights by all women and girls.

It would be important to agree at the UfM Ministerial, where the Ministers of 43 countries will be present, that when talking about gender equality in the Mediterranean region, it is important to reflect on the serious opportunities that such a dynamic would create for the countries which decide to put the respect of women's rights and women's empowerment among their main priorities. Open societies, where human rights and fundamental freedoms of all citizens, both men and women, are recognised and respected are more resilient and stable. Offering job opportunities, education opportunities and exchanges and open dialogue for women across the Mediterranean would prevent radicalisation and violence, further instability and sometimes conflicts. Empowerment of women represents one of the best options to build bridges and enhance cooperation. It represents a powerful engine for peace, security and sustainable development as also stated in the UNSC Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security, and on Youth, Peace and Security. There is also growing evidence that closing the gender gap in the Middle East would dramatically spur economic growth. For women and girls to act as drivers for positive



Workshop "Improving the Value Chain" during the first edition of the UfM Conference on Women Empowerment

political, economic and social changes, they need their participation in public life to be strengthened, equal access to information, equal civic and political rights as men, equal access to public services and social security, to good education and good jobs.

We all need to reinforce our commitment to promoting gender equality in all the countries of the UfM. The situation is critical and important steps still need to be taken.

Further, it is crucial for us to continue our efforts for the improvement of the collection of disaggregated data on cases of all forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention, in order to build a common methodology to compare data bases and analysis.

We should be putting more efforts into the adoption of a common framework to fight gender-based violence. We need to establish targeted measures to ensure that our countries on both sides of the Mediterranean adopt regulatory standards to prevent all forms of gender based violence, including rules assuring the protection of victims.

It is crucial to better promote the work that is realised in our communities. For instance, I take pride in the commitment and the awareness raising that is done in Bulgaria, thanks to the campaign on the prevention of violence against women “open your eyes, break the silence” that I had the honour to promote since 2015.

Indeed, the main idea of this campaign is that all actors need to be fully involved in order to attain real and concrete results: NGOs, police, judges, social workers, decision makers, men and women, etc. At each one of the conferences organised in different regions of Bulgaria, one representative of each “institution” was present. In every event there was one ambassador, a man that would make the difference and inspire other men to get on board in stopping gender-based violence. All the actors would meet around the table and would reflect together on the best measures to be adopted. Never before, all these diverse actors were sitting



Mariya Ivanova Gabriel is a Bulgarian politician and a member of the GERB party. She is the current European Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society. Previously, she was a Member of the European Parliament from 2009 to 2017. There, she served as Vice-President of the European People's Party (EPP) group, Vice-President of EPP Women and head of the Bulgarian EPP delegation.

From 2012 until 2014 Mariya Gabriel was a coordinator of the EPP Group in the Women's Rights and Gender Equality Committee. In this field her work was focused on the fight against all forms of violence against women, work-life balance, women's entrepreneurship and women's access to ICT sectors, equal pay for equal work, and women's role in peacekeeping. In 2016 she started a national campaign 'Violence against women: let's open eyes and break the silence'.

and discussing together. This is essential in order to obtain results. Close and continuous cooperation, inclusion of men, education, awareness-raising, are all ingredients that conducted Bulgaria to sign the Istanbul Convention in 8 months.

This kind of initiatives makes a real difference and we need to keep promoting them.

Moreover, strengthening regional cooperation on this common challenge is paramount. This UfM Ministerial is therefore of crucial importance, as the UfM's member states will take stock of the developments so far and assess concrete ways towards achieving gender equality and the eradication of all forms of gender based discrimination and violence. Each time a nation puts in place a new policy framework empowering women and tackling gender-based inequalities, it represents a substantial progress. However, it is when gender equality policies are fully implemented that they can be effectively translated into improvements in the day-to-day lives of women and girls, and thus generate such positive impact in our societies. This is an additional reason for working all together.

On 25th November each year, we mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and each time we do so, we acknowledge a failure of our societies - and the European Union makes no exception. I stand by what the EU High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini said in her statement on November 2016: "violence against women is violence against the entire society: the entire society has to react, starting with men." There is an important responsibility for policy makers to raise awareness of their citizens, help tackle legal, institutional and socio-cultural obstacles that still impose limits on the achievement of equal rights and opportunities for women. **The message we need to hammer home is that women are full and equal citizens and that gender equality is not simply a moral duty or a matter of social justice, it is the right thing to do if we want to leverage the full potential for socio-economic prosperity and achieve, equal,**

stable and secure societies for all our citizens.

Our action for women's empowerment worldwide has already produced important results. For instance, in ten years, more than 300,000 female students have been enrolled in secondary education thanks to programmes funded by the EU. In the Southern Neighbourhood region the total EU financial support to women-related or gender equality projects between 2010 and 2015 amounted to over €90 M, of which €10 M were implemented at regional level. This has allowed us, for example, to be the main donor with €7M to the UfM project for political and economic empowerment of women covering ten of our Southern partners and aiming at promoting access and effective participation of marginalised women in economic and public life by addressing the barriers that have impeded their engagement in these areas. The 2017 regional Action Programme includes a €3 million programme to support a campaign against gender-based violence and for the accession and ratification of the Istanbul convention by Southern Neighbourhood States.

On this particular problem, I am proud to remind the EU's commitment of 500 million Euros to a new Spotlight Initiative launched together with the United Nations and specifically focused on eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls. The name of the initiative is self-explanatory. On the EU side, this is also meant to be a critical contribution to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as violence against women and girls undermines our core fundamental rights and values, such as dignity, access to justice and gender equality and prevents the women from playing their full potential in the development of our societies.



Participants in the International Conference on Sustainable Development Goals: Actors and Implementation, held in Barcelona in September 2017.

Gender equality: a matter of social justice

- Hala Lattouf, Minister of Social Development, Jordan

Women are having a vital and decisive role in the social, economic and political development. They have achieved great success in terms of enhancing women's status in all aspects of life, thus enacting radical changes in the perception of women and their role in various and diverse fields, in particular leadership and decision-making, specifically in the last decades, where women were able to chart a new enhanced path through their contribution and success. However, the international and regional context are endangering these achievements and our societies still need to support the empowerment of women and capitalize on their capabilities and great potentials, especially in light of the political openness in the Arab world which pushes forward towards new horizons in the field of human rights and political contribution and participation of the citizens, women and men in turn leading to the progress and the achievement of sustainable development at all levels.

Gender equality is first a matter of social justice, allowing equal access to rights, resources and opportunities. But it also makes our societies richer and more secure. In other words, gender equality is a condition of development, and a matter of sustainable peace and security. So it is first a matter of principles - women are empowered, the benefits are perceived by the entire community.

Women in the region have faced many challenges due to increasing violence of extremist groups; whereas extremism, intolerance and exclusion have impacted the area and threatened previous achievements. Such regression has weakened the concept of gender equality and the enjoyment of women's rights. The massive influx of Syrian refugees and displacement has generated human tragedy for millions of people and dire results for hosting governments and societies. Women and girls refugees are disproportionately affected. Violence, child labor, trafficking for sexual exploitation, and early marriages are on the rise.

Besides, the ongoing occupation of Palestine remains a central problem and source of violence in the region, preventing women from achieving their rights. Occupation is a barrier to democratic

development, creating continuous conflicts that affect societies. Women pay the price on all levels, struggling not only for women's rights and equality but for independence, in the process losing their children and husbands.

Jordan, a country with limited natural resources, has devoted much effort to developing its human resources. For the purpose of achieving sustainable economic growth, the country introduced policies, programs, and plans with the ultimate aim of societal development.

Jordan has made significant steps in the reform process. There is political will to achieve equal opportunities and non-discrimination as articulated in the Constitution, National Agenda, and the Civil Service Bylaws. Jordan is recognized as making continuous progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It has also been a pioneering country in the region in the area of anti-corruption legislation, strategies and action plans within the public sector.

Jordan is committed to the 2030 Agenda and to leaving no one behind. The Government of Jordan has submitted its first Voluntary National Review (VNR) which refers to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and presented it at the High Level Political Forum in July 2017.

While the status of Jordanian women has improved considerably in regards to education, health, and life expectancy, advances in these spheres have yet to fully bridge the gender gap. Constraints persist in areas such as representation and participation in the political sphere, employment and visible advances in the labour force, and equities in the social domain. Gender disparity in Jordan has particularly increased during the recent years with the spread of conservatism and nationalism, which has caused regressive backlash against women's rights and gender equity.

In order to achieve gender equality, we should work hard to reach a political solution, ending occupation and initiating a regional peace

process: Working proactively for political solutions to the conflicts and initiating a comprehensive regional peace process

The Union for Mediterranean Secretariat works hard through projects and initiatives to address women's empowerment and gender equality issues in the subterranean region. It plays a vital role in organising annual high level meetings on Women's Empowerment to identify, in partnership with key regional actors, specific and strategic solutions to promote the full participation of women in society. It gathers many countries' members together to talk loudly about the solutions and ideas made to boost women empowerment and gender equality in the region.



Ms. Lattouf has over 20 years of experience in development and public sector work; she held several posts with the Jordanian Government starting at the Ministry of Tourism, Secretary General for the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Public Sector Reform Ministry and Senior Advisor for Public Sector Reform at the Prime Ministry. She has been recently appointed as a Minister of Social Development, where she held the post for over three years in the past.

Prior to her job as a Minister, Ms. Lattouf was the Office Director for Her Majesty Queen Rania Al Abdullah; she also worked with UNDP as head of the poverty and gender team and with the World Bank as a project director.



The UfM labelled project Generation Entrepreneur is promoted by the regional NGO Injaz Al-Arab.

Women's leadership: a driving force for change

- *Nathalie Loiseau, French Minister in charge of European Affairs*

J'ai toujours trouvé admirable l'élan qui, depuis 2006 et la première conférence ministérielle euro-méditerranéenne à Istanbul sur le « rôle des femmes dans la société », a amené à ce que la préoccupation d'une juste participation des femmes à la vie économique de leur pays devienne peu à peu centrale au point d'être aujourd'hui un des domaines prioritaires de l'Union pour la Méditerranée.

Cette montée en puissance illustre la prise de conscience progressive de cette évidence qui pourtant devrait sauter aux yeux de tous : **on ne fait pas progresser un pays en laissant de côté la moitié de sa population.**

Le coût des inégalités femmes-hommes est connu et même quantifié : alors que le taux de participation à l'économie rémunérée des femmes stagne autour de 50% depuis les années 1990 et que des discriminations légales contre les femmes persistent dans 155 pays, **la réduction des inégalités conduirait à une hausse de plusieurs milliards de dollars du PIB mondial.**

L'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes est, chacun le reconnaît, un facteur clé dans les schémas de sortie de crise et pour stabiliser les Etats fragilisés par un conflit.

Plus fondamentalement, comme le Président de la République Emmanuel Macron l'a rappelé à la tribune de l'Assemblée générale des Nations Unies en septembre « c'est un combat de civilisation profond, c'est notre combat, ce sont nos valeurs et elles ne sont pas relatives, elles sont éminemment universelles sur tous les continents, toutes les latitudes ».

La persistance d'inégalités professionnelles entre les femmes et les hommes apparaît pour ce qu'elle est : un immense gâchis de talents. Alors qu'attendons-nous pour faire place aux femmes dans la vie économique et promouvoir le leadership féminin comme moteur du changement ?

Au fil de ma carrière sur les cinq continents, comme diplomate, directrice de l'ENA puis comme ministre, j'ai souvent eu l'occasion de m'interroger

Ever since 2006 and the first Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference in Istanbul on "Strengthening the Role of Women in Society", I have admired the impetus of countries that gradually turned concern over the fair participation of women in their economy into a central theme, to the point where today it is one of the priority areas for the Union for the Mediterranean.

This powerful upswing illustrates the growing awareness of the situation, which should, however, be obvious to all: **we can't make a country advance by disregarding half of its population.**

The cost of gender-bias is known and has even been quantified: while the rate of women's participation in the paid economy has been stagnating at around 50% since the 1990s and legal discrimination against women continues in 155 countries, **reducing**

inequality would lead to a global GDP increase of several billion dollars.

Gender equality is, as everyone recognizes, a key factor in schemes to overcome crises and to stabilise States weakened by conflict.

More fundamentally, as the President of the Republic, Emmanuel Macron reminded during the United Nations General Assembly in September, "it is a profound fight for civilisation, it is our fight, these are our values and they are not relative, they are eminently universal on all continents, at all latitudes".

The persistence of gender inequality in the workplace is an immense waste of talent. So what are we waiting for before giving women a place in the economy and promoting female leadership as a driver of change?

sur le leadership féminin. Plus l'on s'élève dans la hiérarchie de son organisation, plus l'on est appelé à recruter et promouvoir des collaboratrices et des collaborateurs, et plus l'on s'aperçoit que les qualités intrinsèques prêtées aux femmes manager ne sont pas tant des qualités « féminines », avec tous les préjugés et clichés que cela comporte, que des qualités de nouveauté. Si les femmes n'ont pas, en tant que telles, de qualités particulières, elles ont la particularité d'être encore minoritaires, d'être nouvelles venues dans nombre de métiers ou de responsabilités, et donc de questionner ce qu'elles rencontrent, d'apporter une capacité d'étonnement, qui est souvent une capacité de progrès. C'est en cela que les femmes sont des vecteurs de changement.

En œuvrant pour développer l'autonomisation des femmes, l'UpM joue un rôle fondamental qui répond profondément à sa vocation : rassembler sans exclusivité de part et d'autres de la Méditerranée, libérer les énergies, nous permettre de progresser ensemble autour de projets concrets. Je veux saluer l'action menée dans ce domaine par le Secrétaire général Fathallah Sijilmassi ainsi que par Delphine

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During my career on the five continents, as a diplomat, as director of the ENA (École Nationale d'Administration), then as a minister, I have often had the opportunity to ask myself about female leadership. The more we rise within the hierarchy of an organisation, the more we are called upon to recruit and promote collaborators, both male and female, and the more we perceive that the intrinsic qualities of female managers are not so much "feminine" qualities, with all the prejudice and clichés they include, but rather qualities relating to a sense of innovation. If women, as such, do not have specific qualities, they do have the particularity of still being in a minority, of being the newcomers to a number of professions or responsibilities, and they therefore question what they find, they offer a capacity for surprise, which is often a capacity to make progress. It is this that makes women vectors of change.



Nathalie Loiseau is the French Minister in charge of European Affairs since 2017. She is a graduate of the Institute of Political Studies of Paris and INALCO. She has been a consultant in the cabinet of Alain Juppé, Minister of Foreign Affairs (1993-1995), Embassy Secretary in Indonesia, Senegal and Morocco, Head of the Press Service and spokesperson at the French Embassy in Washington (2002-2007), Deputy Director of North Africa at the Department of Foreign Affairs (2007-2008), Deputy Director for North Africa and the Middle East (2008-2009), Director of Human Resources at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2009-2011), Director General of Administration at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2011-2012) and Director of the National School of Administration (2012-2017).



Borione, qui vient de quitter Barcelone, qui a permis la labellisation de projets comme « Femmes d'avenir en Méditerranée » qui vise à constituer un réseau de femmes leaders ou « Compétences au service de la réussite » pour les femmes défavorisées et sans emploi. J'ai la conviction profonde que ce sont ces approches concrètes, au plus près du terrain, qui développent les capacités, encouragent la dissémination des bonnes pratiques et font réellement, petit à petit, changer les choses.

Faire progresser la place des femmes dans la vie économique, ce n'est pas une lubie de pays n'ayant pas d'autres problèmes plus urgents à régler. Ce n'est pas non plus un domaine où quiconque puisse pavoiser.

En France, l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes a été consacrée « Grande cause nationale » par le Président de la République pour la durée du quinquennat. Cela a pu surprendre certains, alors

que tant d'avancées ont été réalisées en matière d'égalité, certainement pas ceux qui suivent de près ces sujets et encore moins ceux qui s'intéressent de près à l'Europe et constatent que nous ne sommes pas en avance. C'est ce regard lucide qui a conduit le Premier ministre à lancer le 4 octobre une vaste opération « Tour de France de l'Egalité » pour faire progresser l'égalité des droits mais aussi assurer l'égalité dans les faits. J'y participerai aux côtés de la Secrétaire d'Etat Marlène Schiappa, qui anime ce Tour de France, comme je participerai en novembre à la Conférence qu'organise l'UpM au Caire.

C'est une bataille du quotidien que nous menons, une bataille sans haut fait d'armes et sans médailles, mais avec ses héroïnes, toutes ces femmes qui repoussent jour après jour les limites qu'on leur a imposées pour prendre toute leur place dans le développement de leurs pays et les transformer en profondeur. Je suis fière que nous soyons à leurs côtés.

By working to promote women empowerment, the UpM plays a fundamental role that resonates deeply with its purpose: to come together from all parts of the Mediterranean without exception, to unleash energy, and to work together to make progress on concrete projects. I want to commend the action taken in this domain by Secretary General Fathallah Sijilmassi as well as by Delphine Borione, who just left Barcelona, allowing for the labelling of projects such as "Women for the Future in the Mediterranean", which aims to build a network of women leaders, and "Skills for Success" for underprivileged and unemployed women. It is my deep conviction that it is these concrete approaches at the grassroots level that develop skills, encourage the dissemination of good practices and little by little, enable things to change.

Advancing women's position in the economy is not a whim of countries that don't have other, more urgent problems to resolve. It is also not a domain that just anyone can boast about.

In France, the President of the Republic has made gender equality a "Great National Cause" for the duration of his five-year term. This may have surprised some, since so many advances have been made in terms of equality, but certainly not those who follow these subjects closely and less still those who take a close interest in Europe and see that we are not ahead. It is this lucid view that led the Prime Minister to launch a huge operation on 4th October entitled the "Tour de France for Equality" to advance equal rights but also to ensure equality in actions. I will be participating in this alongside Secretary of State Marlène Schiappa, who is leading this Tour de France, just as I will be participating in the Conference organised by the UpM in Cairo in November.

It is a daily battle that we wage, a battle that wields no weapons and offers no medals, but does have its heroines. All of these women who, day after day, push back the limits imposed upon them to take up their rightful position in the development of their countries and to deeply transform them. I am proud that we are standing by their side.

Women: custodians of cultural, social and religious values.

- Maya Morsi, President of the National Council of Women, Egypt

Egypt has long been recognized as an effective player in the promotion of cooperation between the two shores of the Mediterranean prior to the launch of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM). As one of its main founders, Egypt paved the way for possible cooperation among countries with the vision of achieving developmental and societal welfare, which would - in turn - lead to the transformation of the area of this sea to one that is peaceful, prosperous and secure.

Regional frameworks and the UfM play an important role in strengthening the role of women in societies to ensure progress towards the achievement of the sustainable development goals (SDGs), and in particular goal 5 -Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls- by sharing and offering innovative solutions that would break the glass ceiling for women in the region.

Egypt managed to break the glass-ceiling for women's representation in elected and decision

making bodies. In two historic precedents, two women were the first ever to hold the position of Advisor to the President on National Security and the position of Governor, respectively, paving the way for many more women to fulfil similar aspirations. Women parliamentarians comprise 15% of the current parliamentary seats, which is regarded as a major breakthrough and the highest record in modern Egyptian history. Additionally, four women cabinet ministers hold key ministries, and 80 female judges were appointed over the past years, making it possible for the public to recognize and evaluate the capacities of women.

Following the adoption of the 2014 Constitution, which includes more than 20 provisions that guarantee the rights of women and support their empowerment, the Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al Sisi - in a historical precedent - announced 2017 as the "Year of Egyptian Women," describing expediting steps towards the empowerment of women, in addition to safeguarding their constitutional rights as a "national duty." In a



The UfM project Generation Entrepreneur aims to develop and sustain an environment of entrepreneurship in Egypt and other countries from the region.

demonstration of Egypt's strong political will and commitment to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women, the President of Egypt further announced his endorsement of the first "National Women's Strategy 2030" globally to achieve the SDGs.

The Egyptian President further called upon the National Council for Women in Egypt (NCW), the Government of Egypt, and all national institutions to regard the National Women's Strategy 2030 as the reference document that guides the upcoming work on the SDGs, besides implementing all plans, programmes, and projects reflected in the strategy. He further affirmed the proposal to establish a special observatory to follow up on its implementation.

The National Women's Strategy 2030 is comprised of four main pillars; the first is women's political empowerment and leadership; the second is women's economic empowerment; the third is social empowerment; and fourth is protection. It is devised to enact women's constitutional rights that foster principles of equality and non-discrimination, equal opportunity, and protection. It is not a standalone strategy for gender equality and women's rights advocates, but rather a roadmap for the Egyptian society at large, especially men, youth, and all state institutions. To ensure that the objectives of the strategy will be met, NCW established an observatory that will follow up on its implementation through the rigorous application of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, including the establishment of baselines and indicators to measure ongoing progress.

In addition to the National Women's Strategy 2030, the Egyptian government developed a standalone "National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women," a "National Strategy to Combat Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)," a "National Strategy to Combat Early Marriage," a "National Population Strategy," and launched the "Egypt Economic Cost of Gender Based Violence Survey" as the lead Arab Country.



Maya Morsi took office as President of Egypt's National Council for Women (NCW) on 1 February 2016.

In 2016, Dr. Morsi launched the first nationwide campaign on Women's Empowerment "Taa Marboota: The secret of your power" with the aim of utilizing the power of media and communications to address misconceptions and redefine gender roles.

Prior to joining the NCW, Maya Morsi had served, since 2013, as Regional Advisor on Gender Policies and Programmes in the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Regional Centre for Arab States in Cairo. She was responsible for providing policy advice for women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming.

Maya Morsi's career spans more than twenty years of dedicated service to the advancement of women and defending their fundamental rights. She served as Head of the Egypt Country Office of the United Nations Fund for Women – UNIFEM (2000-2013); UNIFEM Project Coordinator (1999-2000); Consultant for the Girls Education and Empowerment Project of the Ministry of Education in Egypt (1998-1999); and Project Officer in the Sustainable Human Development Platform for Action and Monitoring (1995-1998).

Cognizant of the importance of women's participation at all levels, the National Council for Women (NCW) launched the first nationwide campaign on Women's Empowerment. Launched globally at the Commission on the Status of Women at the United Nations in New York and a recipient of the "Cristal (Gold Equivalent)" award in the Arab Culture section in Corporate Communication Effectiveness. "The Secret of Your Power" breaks the glass ceiling for women and presents the unconventional roles that women can play. It is positioned as the 100 million behavioural and ideational campaign, following its massive success with over 100 celebrities and public figures endorsing it, besides its consideration for regional and global awards.

To ensure that all women, including the marginalized and those living in rural and remote areas are not left behind, the NCW designed an innovative awareness raising methodology which was named after the practice of the actual knocking on the doors of all women in Egyptian districts and villages. The "Knocking Door Campaigns" cover Egypt's 27 governorates, reaching out to women and their families to raise their awareness about various topics that relate to the empowerment of women and the added value of their participation at all levels. Through the Knocking Door Campaigns, women also learn about the various government services provided, including legal and economic support. The methodology has successfully reached out to 1,100,000 women across Egypt who are able to exchange views about their needs and aspirations and who have become aware about their different rights and responsibilities.

In response to the unprecedented wave of terrorism and extremism around the world, more than 7000 women gathered across all Egyptian governorates - including representatives of civil society organizations - to announce a statement that expresses their commitment and support to national, regional, and international efforts to prevent terrorism and extremism. Political leaders and institutions in Egypt recognize that women can be powerful preventers and participate in

innovative efforts to inform, shape, and implement policies and programs to mitigate the effect of terrorism and extremism.

Women are the custodians of cultural, social, and religious values, and are uniquely positioned to transmit these ideals to the next generation.

I am confident that the UfM Ministerial Conference on strengthening the role of women in society (Cairo, Egypt- 27 November 2017) and its action-oriented Ministerial Declaration will take the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in the field of women empowerment a leap forward.



Young Jordanian woman involved in the project Skills for Success.

Empowering girls and women to transform entire societies

- *Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General of the World Health Organization*

I am honoured to contribute these brief comments to the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Ministerial Conference on Women.

I believe we must place the well-being of women, children, and adolescents at the centre of global health and development and also position health at the centre of the gender equality agenda. So the focus of your conference resonates strongly.

The ambitious health and development targets in the SDGs will not be realized unless we improve the health, dignity and rights of women, children and adolescents. Investing in the health and well-being of women and girls is an investment in a better future.

Women's health and well-being matter not only to women but to their families and the society as a whole.

As a champion for sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) I believe every woman and adolescent girl can decide whether, when and with whom she has a baby, and be able to prevent any unwanted pregnancies. Because when women and girls can access family planning, they have better control over their own lives, their education, their ability to work, and their ability to support their families. It really is one of the basic ingredients of sustainable development.

I also recognize that gender equality goes beyond SRHR. This is why WHO is pleased to partner with the unique intergovernmental framework of the Union for the Mediterranean in the "Women Right to Health" project.

This project aimed at increasing access to cervical cancer prevention and management. Its goal was ambitious: 45,000 women in the appropriate age range will be offered a test for cervical (25-65 yrs.) and breast (40-65yrs.) cancer and will be

made aware of the risks and the importance of prevention. Pilot screening projects have been initiated in all three target countries (Morocco Albania and Montenegro).

Cervical cancer is a preventable disease, yet over a quarter of a million women die of cervical cancer each year, with 90% of deaths occurring in low- and middle-income countries. In the Mediterranean region cervical cancer is also of growing concern.

Since 2006, HPV vaccines are available that can prevent between 70 and 90% of cancer cases and WHO recommends girls between 9 and 14 years of age to be vaccinated. By 2017, globally, just over a third of countries have introduced HPV vaccination in their national vaccination schedule. However, large inequities exist: whereas 70% of high income countries have introduced HPV vaccination, only 20% of middle-income and 6% of low-income countries have done.

Globally, in 2015, only 12% of countries reported cervical cancer screening programmes with participation rates greater than 70% with participation rates higher in high income countries. Women who need the services most are the ones most likely to miss them as they may not know of the services or may not be able to access the service.

Cervical cancer is highly curable when detected in earlier stages, but five year age standardized relative survival rates (proportion of people surviving five years after diagnosis) vary from 13% in Uganda to 79% in South Korea.

As you can see from these statistics, cervical cancer is an example not only of science and medicine but also of equity. One of the great benefits of the gender equality movement is it also encourages to look at equity more generally. Of course we need better gender and income disaggregated data to do a better job of applying this equity lens.

Against this backdrop, it is obvious that more needs to be done – particularly for poor and vulnerable women. The new UN Global Joint Programme (Joint Programme) will implement the World Health Organization (WHO) comprehensive approach to cervical cancer prevention and control which consists of: (i) introduction and scaling-up of HPV vaccination; (ii) introduction and expanding coverage of screening and treatment of precancerous lesions; (iii) prompt management of invasive cancers; (iv) access to palliative care and; (v) monitoring using a standard set of indicators and tools to end cervical cancer.

Cervical cancer is just one example of how health is at the centre of the gender equality agenda and gender equality (and equity more generally) should be at the centre of the health and development agenda. I am honoured WHO is working with the Union for the Mediterranean to promote both gender equality and the right to health – since you cannot have one without the other.



Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus is globally recognised as a health scholar, researcher, and diplomat with first-hand experience in research, operations, and leadership in emergency responses to epidemics. He was elected as WHO Director-General in May 2017.

Immediately after taking office Dr Tedros outlined five key priorities for the Organization: universal health coverage; health emergencies; women's, children's and adolescents' health; health impacts of climate and environmental change; and a transformed WHO.

Prior to his election as WHO Director-General, Dr Tedros served as Ethiopia's Minister of Foreign Affairs from 2012–2016. In this role he led efforts to negotiate the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, in which 193 countries committed to the financing necessary to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Dr Tedros also served as Ethiopia's Minister of Health from 2005–2012, where he led a comprehensive reform of the country's health system.

Throughout his career Dr Tedros has published numerous articles in prominent scientific journals, and received awards and recognition from across the globe.

Gender and climate change : need for international, national and local action

- *Patricia Espinosa, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*

Gender inequality is not only a pressing moral and social issue but also an economic challenge and a critical barrier in the implementation of climate change and sustainability solutions.

Climate change affects the most vulnerable, who are often women and the children they care for. But we also know that the full and direct involvement of women increases the palette of solutions and options for successful implementation of climate action across the board.

Women need to be able to unfold their full potential, irrespective of their place in society, to cope with change, as well as to be active agents of change. This is an issue that I am personally committed to and I am grateful that more and more opportunities are opening up to respond to this urgent need.

One such opportunity is the International Gender Champions Network, a network of senior leaders that works to advance gender equality in the executive management of their institutions and in their programmatic work through concrete and measurable commitments.

In June of this year, I became an International Gender Champion under the International Gender Champions Network. As one of my commitments, I signed the panel parity pledge, meaning that I will from now on request organizers of any event at which I am speaking to ensure gender balance among the panelists.

I want to ensure that when we talk about a topic as significant as climate change, women who are working in this field are provided an equal opportunity to share their knowledge and perspectives.

This both enriches panel discussions and provides profile-building visibility for female experts and leaders.

At the same time, I launched the Bonn-Berlin chapter of the network and aim to invite senior leaders from government, international organizations, civil

and private sectors based in Bonn and Berlin to join the network as gender champions.

UN Climate Change will be hosting the annual climate change conference – COP 23 – in Bonn, Germany this year, and we hope to report on the expansion of the network at the COP.

Beyond the Bonn-Berlin chapter, I encourage executive management across the world to become active gender champions, including as members of the International Gender Champions Network in their own location.

Another opportunity to address gender inequality is of course through policy. In terms of policy, we have come a long way. Just 10 years ago, the linkages between gender equality and climate change were not often recognized.

Today, we can look with pride to the Paris Climate Change Agreement, which is the first multilateral environmental agreement to include human rights language, including gender equality, the empowerment of women and intergenerational equity, in its preamble.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) also prominently recognizes the need for gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment in Goal 5. The Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are intrinsically linked. Action on one is action on the other and together they provide a very clear policy framework for action on gender and the empowerment of women and girls.

Strengthening, promoting and fully integrating gender equality into all actions under the Paris Agreement, will simultaneously contribute to achieving SDG Goal 5. This is one way of boosting gender equality through policy that is open to every country that has ratified the Paris Agreement.

Of course one of the first steps in this is ensuring that national delegations to our climate change conferences include more female negotiators. In

fact, Parties have set themselves goals on gender balance, as well as on increasing the participation of women in the climate change process.

Currently, Least Developed Countries (LDCs) have a direct avenue through which they can scale up efforts to increase the participation of women: the Women Delegates Fund. Not only does the fund increase female participation in delegations from LDCs, it also provides negotiating skills training ahead of climate change conferences.

The Paris Agreement also reaffirms the need for gender-responsive climate policy development in the context of adaptation as well as capacity-building. These provisions are already bearing fruit as Parties have decided to scale up their gender-responsive climate policy through the renewed Lima work programme on gender and the gender action plan, which will be developed at COP 23 in Bonn.

The gender action plan provides an opportunity

to enhance coherence and the integration of gender considerations across all UNFCCC work-streams by providing the 'how to' for existing gender mandates. It should certainly strengthen implementation action and on-the-ground impacts of these UNFCCC decisions.

Successful implementation will require an unprecedented level of collaboration and cooperation between governments, companies, intergovernmental organizations and civil society to raise awareness, drive action and ensure that climate policy is truly gender-responsive. This is where organizations such as the Union for the Mediterranean can play an important role in linking these different actors and providing a venue for the exchange of knowledge and experience in the region.

Yet the vulnerability of women in the context of climate change, as well as their key role in affecting solutions and implementing them can perhaps best be seen at the local level.



For example, a previous award winner under the UNFCCC's own Momentum for Change initiative illustrates the multiple benefits that can be achieved when women are involved in the design and implementation of climate solutions. 'Solar Sister' combines breakthrough clean energy technology with a deliberately woman-centered direct sales network that brings light and economic opportunity to even the most remote communities in rural Africa. Since 2010, Solar Sister has built a network of 2,000 women entrepreneurs who have brought clean energy access to over 350,000 people across Sub-Saharan Africa. In addition, the business structure of the Solar Sister organization affirms the important role of women in leadership and decision-making: the CEO is a woman and over 50% of the board are women.

The climate impacts of the project include replacing fossil fuel lamps with solar lamps which directly reduces carbon emissions. As the primary consumers of household energy, women are critical for successful adaptation of clean energy solutions. The founders of Solar Sister believed that investing in women was a prerequisite for large-scale adoption of clean energy technologies at a grassroots level. The growth of the initiative validates this belief. The gender inclusive system approach, combined with an enterprise model led by women to bring sustainable livelihood opportunities to address energy poverty, makes the Solar Sister one model for future initiatives.



On 18 May 2016, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon appointed Patricia Espinosa of Mexico as Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Ambassador of Mexico to Germany since 2012 and from 2001 to 2002, Ms. Espinosa was Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mexico from 2006 to 2012, bringing more than 30 years of experience at highest levels in international relations, specialized in climate change, global governance, sustainable development, gender equality and protection of human rights.

As Mexico's representative on multilateral bodies and international organizations, Ms. Espinosa has been engaged as leader in the global challenge to address climate change and its consequences, notably as Chair of the 16th Conference of the Parties leading to the adoption of the Cancun Agreements.

Elected Chair of the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly (1996) she played a key role in the process leading to the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action at the 4th World Conference on Women.



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The UfM labelled project Generation Entrepreneur is being implemented in 7 countries from the MENA region.

Empowerment of young people and women: the key to development.

- *Faten Kallel, Secretary of State responsible for Youth, Tunisia*

Si dans les discours la question du renforcement du leadership féminin et jeune relève de l'évidence et accuse un consensus, il n'en est pas de même des mécanismes mis en place pour assoir ce leadership. Jusque-là la discrimination positive en faveur de ces deux catégories, a été un outil important d'intégration et de développement du leadership politique, leur permettant une meilleure participation à la prise de décision, et cela s'en ressent, ne serait-ce qu'en Tunisie où on vient tout juste de promulguer une loi faisant barrage aux violences contre les femmes, grâce à un lobbying féminin fort au sein de l'Assemblée des Représentants du Peuple. Néanmoins si ce mécanisme connaît un développement sans précédent en faveur des femmes, il n'est pas aussi affirmé pour les jeunes, qui restent le moins que l'on puisse dire marginalisés, avec des taux de représentation assez faibles, sûrement à cause d'un manque d'organisation dû aux caractéristiques même de cette population. En ce sens et dans le cadre de la coopération régionale, le travail effectué par l'Union pour la Méditerranée

au travers des plateformes régionales de dialogue est primordial à la réalisation de l'autonomisation des femmes Méditerranéennes. La 4^{ème} réunion ministérielle de l'UpM sur le Renforcement du Rôle des Femmes dans la Société est une rencontre nécessaire afin de renforcer les efforts régionaux déjà entrepris mais c'est surtout l'occasion de faire progresser, au travers d'approches concrètes, la place des femmes tant aux niveaux politiques qu'économiques.

Néanmoins, un grand défi reste à relever en ce qui concerne l'autonomisation économique des femmes car au-delà du domaine politique très peu de mécanismes ont été introduits pour affirmer ce leadership.

Une autonomisation d'abord financière, clé de l'émancipation, en encourageant les femmes et les jeunes à se prendre en charge très tôt dans leur parcours afin de se donner la plus grande marge de choix possible.

If the issue of reinforcing female and youth leadership in the speeches demonstrates evidence and acknowledges a consensus, it is not the same as mechanisms put in place to consolidate this leadership. Until now, the positive discrimination in favour of these two categories, has been an important integration and development tool of political leadership, enabling them better participation in decision-making, and that without experiencing, would that not be in Tunisia where a law blocking violence against women has just been passed, thanks to strong female lobbying in the Assembly of representatives of the People. Nevertheless, if this mechanism is experiencing an unprecedented development in favour of women, it is not as pronounced for young people, who remain, at the least we can say, marginalised, with rather low representation rates, surely as a result of a lack of organisation due to the very characteristics of this population. In this sense and in the framework of regional cooperation, the work carried out by

the Union for the Mediterranean through regional platforms for dialogue is essential to achieving the empowerment of Mediterranean women. The 4th UfM Ministerial Meeting on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society is a necessary meeting to reinforce the regional efforts already undertaken but it is above all an opportunity to advance, through concrete approaches, the place of women at both political and economic levels.

However, beyond the political domain, very few mechanisms have been introduced to affirm this leadership, mainly in the economic domain. At this level, a major challenge, that of empowerment, is still to be taken note of.

An empowerment which is first and foremost financial, the key to emancipation, by encouraging women and young people to take responsibility very early on in their career in order to give themselves the widest range of options available.

En leur permettant d'être au plus près de leurs capacités et ambitions, dans un environnement propice à cela, à savoir des lois adaptées à l'insertion professionnelle, un système financier en phase avec leurs besoins et une administration réactive et à l'écoute. L'autonomisation financière devra s'accompagner nécessairement par des mécanismes d'accès égalitaire à l'information, palliant ainsi au manque d'intégration sociale de cette population et permettant une meilleure mise en évidence des opportunités économiques existantes, tant sur le plan local que national ou régional.

Il reste nécessaire de souligner l'impact de la mobilité sur l'autonomisation et le développement du leadership. **Les multiples restrictions existantes entre les pays du nord et du sud, relatives à la mobilité et principalement celle des jeunes, basées exclusivement sur des arguments sécuritaires, représentent un handicap majeur.** On met souvent en évidence les arguments relatifs aux volets sécuritaires et économiques en faveur

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This will enable them to be closer to their skills and ambitions, in an enabling environment, to be aware of the laws adapted to professional integration, a financial system in line with their needs and an administration which is reactive and attentive. Financial empowerment must be accompanied by mechanisms of equal access to information, thus compensating for the lack of social integration of this population and allowing existing financial opportunities, both on the local and national or regional plan, to be made more evident.

But it is necessary to underline the impact of mobility on empowerment and development of leadership. **The multiple restrictions which exist between northern and southern countries, regarding mobility and mainly that of young people, based exclusively on security arguments, represents a major handicap.** Arguments concerning security and financial aspects in favour of these restrictions are often brought to light, but a real analysis of their social impact has never



Faten Kallel, 36, Tunisian female politician. Currently holding the post of Secretary of State responsible for Youth Affairs, member of the National Unity Government since August 2016. Consultant in trade management, specialising mainly in public governance, she held the posts of councillor under the auspices of Minister of Development, Investment and International Cooperation, and of Minister of Technologies and Digital Economy.

A member of the political office of the liberal party Afek Tounes, she was a candidate in the 2011 and 2014 legislative elections. In March 2017, she was nominated by the World Economic Forum among the list of Young Global Leaders.

de ces restrictions, or jamais une réelle analyse de leur impact social n'a été engagée. Dans un monde où la technologie offre une ouverture sans précédent, il est nécessaire de revoir les mécanismes d'échange et de mobilité des êtres humains entre pays.

Le plaidoyer reste aussi à revoir, jusque-là la démarche entreprise par les progressistes, pour plaider en faveur d'une meilleure inclusion des femmes et des jeunes dans le processus économique et politique, s'est basée principalement sur des arguments liés aux principes d'égalité et des droits humains. Or ceux qui sont issus de pays où la pensée conservatrice domine, principalement les pays du sud, savons très bien que ces arguments n'ont pas l'impact nécessaire pour insuffler un changement au rythme que nous espérons. C'est pour cela d'ailleurs qu'à chaque nouvel épisode sur la question : nouvelle loi, nouvelle mesure, nouveau programme, nous sentons la difficulté d'imposer une certaine rationalité au débat, pour

tomber rapidement dans les guerres idéologiques qui font perdre aux initiatives entreprises leur consistance et par conséquent leur impact.

Il est primordial aujourd'hui d'adapter nos arguments au contexte et de se concentrer directement ce qui pourrait influencer le choix des citoyens, à savoir l'impact économique du conservatisme ou le manque à gagner dû à l'exclusion politique et économique des jeunes et des femmes. De ce fait il est nécessaire de mettre en évidence les effets du développement social sur les politiques économiques : sans une évolution sociale, le développement économique des nations ne peut se produire.

D'ailleurs si je pars de l'expérience tunisienne, le constat est clair, les régions les plus développées sont les régions ayant un meilleur taux d'intégration des femmes et des jeunes.

been undertaken. In a world where technology offers unprecedented openness, it is necessary to review the exchange and mobility mechanisms of human beings between countries.

The plea should also be reviewed. Until now, the steps taken by progressive individuals to make a case in favour of better inclusion of women and young people in financial and political processes, were based mainly on arguments linked to principles of equality and human rights. Yet, those from countries where the conservative way of thinking is dominant, mainly southern countries, are fully aware that these arguments do not have the necessary impact to inject a change of pace that we are expecting. Moreover, this is why with each new episode on the issue—be it a new law, initiative or programme—we sense the difficulty of imposing a certain rationality on the debate, to quickly fall into ideological wars that result in the initiatives taken losing their consistency, and consequently their impact.

Nowadays, it is essential to adapt our arguments to the context and to focus directly on what could influence citizens' choice, namely the financial impact of conservatism or the shortfalls due to the political and economic exclusion of young people and women. Consequently, it is necessary to highlight the effects of social development on financial policies: without social change, the financial development of nations cannot take place.

Furthermore, basing myself on the Tunisian experience, it can be clearly observed that the most developed regions are the regions with a better integration rate of women and young people.

On the contrary, the conservative regions, although they often have important natural resources, struggle to make progress financially. Maximising the chances of a population's success inevitably involves the development of all its skills, especially for populations made up mostly of young people, where women are increasingly educated and

A contrario les régions conservatrices, bien que souvent détentrices de richesses naturelles importantes, ont du mal à décoller économiquement. Maximiser les chances de réussite d'une population, implique inévitablement le développement de toutes ses compétences, surtout pour des populations majoritairement jeunes, où la femme est de plus en plus instruite et représente une force de travail importante. Si l'esprit d'entrepreneuriat et d'innovation est connu aux jeunes, l'empathie, la bienveillance et l'éthique sont reconnues comme des qualités féminines. Une société dont le leadership est innovant, énergique, empathique et bienveillant ne pourrait que se développer dans le bon sens.

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represent an important workforce. If young people are known for having an entrepreneurial and innovation spirit, empathy, kindness and being ethical are recognised as being female qualities... A society in which leadership is innovative, energetic, empathetic and benevolent can only develop in the right direction.

Overview of the Strategy for the Ministry for Women, Family Affairs and Children regarding Women Empowerment

- *Neziha Labidi, Minister of Women, Family and Childhood, Tunisia*

The new Tunisian constitution of January 2014 shows positive signs in terms of the defence of women's rights with two articles, in particular Articles 21 and 46 which rule on discrimination and equal opportunities in positions of responsibility, and gender-based violence. In addition, the vote of 26 July 2017 by the Assembly of the Representatives of the People (ARP) in favour of a law to combat violence against women shows further promising signs.

Nevertheless, and despite these advances, socioeconomic inequality in Tunisia still affects women.

- Since 2015, women represent 50.2% of the working-age population and 28.2% of the active population. The gap in average salary compared to men remains significant.
- The unemployment rate for women was estimated as 22.5% in 2015 compared to 12.4% for men.
- In the formal private sector, women are underpaid compared to men, with a difference in average salary of -25.4% (NSI, Gender report 2015). In the informal sector, women are underpaid when compared to the guaranteed minimum industrial wage (SMG), with an estimated gap of -35.5% in 2012.
- In the services industry, the salary gap has further widened to -40.4% in 2012 compared to -25.8% in 2000.
- Furthermore, the 2015 data show that the percentage of women occupying decision-making positions in civil service compared to the total number of civil servants is just 0.76%.



Participants in the second edition of the UfM Women Conference

It is precisely to compensate for these inequalities that the Tunisian government in its Five-Year Plan has set a target participation rate of 35% for women in the labour market by 2020.

On a social level, the Ministry for Women, Family Affairs and Children is working to ensure better childcare service coverage in the country (nurseries and kindergartens) to allow women to dedicate more time to paid work and to compensate for certain inequalities regarding access to funding, the Ministry has established a line of investment credit that is exclusively for women who have project ideas.

Nowadays, and with the adoption of a new comprehensive law addressing violence against women, Tunisia is reaffirming its commitment in respect of human rights and equal opportunities, and it calls upon the Union for the Mediterranean and its Member countries to strengthen regional cooperation, combine their efforts to address challenges, and consider women as valuable actors and as a solution to further sustainable development.



Politician and activist, Neziha Labidi is Minister of Women, Family and Childhood in Tunisia.

She began her career as a teacher, before being appointed head of the International Cooperation and External Relations Department at the Ministry of Women, Family and Children, where she later took over position of Director of the Promotion of Women.

She was elected the first Secretary General of the Tunisian Organization for Education and Family, Executive Director for the Arab World at the Center for Environmental Education in the Mediterranean Region, and National Coordinator of the Network of Trainers for the development of women in the Mediterranean.

Neziha LABIDI initiated a number of studies such as the study on "The distribution of the time budget between women and men" and the national strategy to combat violence against women.

She has also had many contributions in regional and international bodies.

Together towards the advancement of women

- Teresa Fragoso, President of the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality, Portugal

It is with great pleasure that I accept the challenge of contributing to this text for the Cairo Ministerial Conference on Women in the framework of the Union for the Mediterranean - UfM. This Conference will gather representatives of Governments and civil society from a wide and heterogeneous regional area. Hence, this is a privileged space for debating the situation of women and a unique opportunity to deepen cooperation within the Mediterranean Countries from a Human Rights perspective.

Undoubtedly, it is not possible to consolidate Democracy without respect for the human rights of women. The process of establishing the democratic regime in Portugal (1974) was also an opportunity to break from the past regarding the situation of women. The Constitution of 1976, which established equality for women and men at all levels, has made a decisive contribution to this understanding and has made possible a new legal framework. This ensured not only that all people are equal before the law but also gave the State's obligation to promote equality between women and men.

However, despite the decisive importance of the Constitution and the law, de facto equality must still be ensured. Therefore, soon after the consolidation of democracy, a governmental mechanism was created in 1977 that, following successive reorganizations, gave rise to the current Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (CIG), celebrating its 40th anniversary this year. In Portugal, the CIG is responsible for implementing public policies to promote and protect gender equality, including policies to combat domestic and gender based violence as well as trafficking in human beings.

In order to achieve the above mentioned de facto gender equality, specific public policies have been developed and implemented since CIG's inception based on the competences ascribed in its organic law. Since the 1990s it took on a more structured approach based on a succession of National Action Plans. Presently a new National Strategy for Gender Equality is being prepared with a broader and longer term approach following the 2030 Agenda for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.



Young women taking part in a workshop organized by Injaz Al-Arab.

The efforts made in the last 40 years to promote equality between women and men have resulted in a very significant improvement in the situation of women in Portugal in various fields. One of these fields is Education.

The promotion of girls' access to education led to an equal participation of girls and boys throughout compulsory education, with the female illiteracy rate decreasing from 31% in 1970 to 6.8% in 2011.

As for higher education, currently almost two-thirds (61%) of the Portuguese population with higher education are women.

As regards professional activity, which is a fundamental element for the economic independence of women, the Portuguese women's participation in the labor market is among the highest in the European Union at 67.4% (2016).

Another area where female representation was scarce is Civic and Political participation. In the first democratically elected parliament in 1975, the representation of women was only 8.9% and 1.9% cent in the first Government. Despite the improvement in the status of women in other areas of social life, politics continued to be a predominantly male activity until the adoption of the so-called Parity Law in 2006. It was thus possible to reach the present values of 33% of women in the national Parliament elected in 2015. Currently the national Government has a representation of 30.5% of women.

Also, with regard to the presence of women in economic decision-making this year a law was passed that establishes a minimum threshold of 33.3% for the underrepresented sex in managerial and supervisory bodies of public sector companies as well publicly traded companies.

Another relevant measure to fight inequality of responsibilities within the family was the adoption of legislation on parental leave to working parents, which recognizes the right of men to exercise their



Teresa Fragoso has been president of the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (CIG) since August 2016, following a previous tenure in the same position in 2011–2012. As the head of Portugal's national machinery for women's rights, Ms Fragoso's responsibilities include strategic planning in the framework of the National Action Plans for women's rights and gender equality policy, providing political and technical support to the member of Government in charge of Equality, strengthening partnerships with the private sector and civil society, and ensuring gender mainstreaming in the annual plans of all ministries. Ms Fragoso's previous roles include working as a political adviser to the Portuguese Secretary of State for Citizenship and Gender Equality (2015–2016) as well as to the Portuguese Secretary of State of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. She has also worked as a gender and development specialist with UNWOMEN in East Timor.



paternity rights granting them exclusive licenses since 1999, as well as the possibility of sharing parental leave with the mother of the child.

The above mentioned measures are part of a holistic strategy to fight the gender stereotypes that define the roles attributed to women and men since their childhood. Such social representations condition individuals' choices throughout their lives in the personal, family and professional contexts. But it is within the educational system that there has been a greater effort to deconstruct these discriminatory gender stereotypes. An in depth and continuous work has been developed in what regards teachers training, the production of educational resources, as well as the revision of school curricula and provision of guidelines for school manuals' editors with the purpose of promoting gender equality practices in education.

When talking about the progress in gender equality in Portugal it is also important to highlight the work that has been developed in combating gender based violence. This is a persistent problem that continues to affect Portuguese society, and indeed most societies, as it has deep roots and therefore difficult to eradicate. This once invisible, ignored and tolerated phenomenon has now gained visibility and public condemnation. Gender based violence, including domestic violence, is considered to be a serious violation of human rights and has been the subject of national action plans since 1999 focusing on the prevention of the phenomenon, the protection of the victims and the punishment of the perpetrators.

Portugal's commitment to combating gender-based violence is evident in the fact that it was the first country in the European Union to ratify, on 5 February 2013, the Council of Europe Convention on the Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence - Istanbul Convention.

Despite the many progress made in the situation of women, both in Portugal and in other countries, de facto inequalities remain that need to be addressed.

Objectives such as the promotion of gender balance in decision-making, whether political or economic, or the deepening of equality in the labor market and the sharing of responsibilities (professional, personal and family), are far from being achieved, denying women a full exercise of their rights and legitimate aspirations.

I firmly believe that the Regional Dialogue Process on the Empowerment of Women, launched by the UfM is a decisive instrument for improving the situation of women in the Euro-Mediterranean region in the various social fields. For this reason it is a great honor for Portugal to host the 4th High Level Conference on Women in the second half of 2018. We are certain that this forum will be another relevant step towards strengthening the crucial role of the UfM in protecting and promoting women's rights in our region.

Islam and women: the priorities of a reformist approach

- Asma Lamrabet, Director of the Center for Women's Studies in Islam in the Rabita Mohammadia des Olémas, Morocco

La question des femmes, en général, et des musulmanes en particulier, est aujourd'hui au centre de tous les débats sur la modernité, les valeurs universelles et le « vivre ensemble » des sociétés contemporaines mondialisées. Et dans ce cadre-là, il est important de souligner le rôle que joue l'Union pour la Méditerranée qui met au cœur de son agenda positif pour la Méditerranée la question de l'autonomisation des femmes comme moteur de l'intégration régional et du développement inclusif. Ces questions-là sont essentielles afin de transcender les non-dits, les malentendus et les stéréotypes de part et d'autres et de constituer un véritable espace de dialogue sincère et constructif au-delà des frontières géographiques et culturelles.

En effet, et de façon très caricaturale, on constate que la question des femmes en islam continue d'être prise en otage entre une islamophobie largement médiatisée et banalisée et un patriarcat politico-culturel encore très prégnant au sein des sociétés et communautés musulmanes. **Les femmes**

musulmanes sont donc toujours les victimes de choix des débats polémiques récurrents, au sein de leurs sociétés et ailleurs, et sont généralement instrumentalisées par des politiques qui se font le plus souvent sans elles, voire à leur insu.

Malgré la difficulté aujourd'hui de faire la part des choses entre un islam instrumentalisé de tout bord et une idéologie xénophobe de plus en plus flagrante, il s'avère que oui on peut se frayer un autre chemin. Un chemin loin de toutes ces idéologies extrêmes qu'elles soient celles de la géopolitique, du consumérisme ultralibéral, de la misogynie mondialisée incarnée par la recrudescence des populismes politiques de tous bords ou celle de l'horreur de l'extrémisme religieux au nom d'un islam dévoyé de son éthique spirituelle.

L'islam permet la polygamie, impose la soumission des femmes aux hommes, les voile, leur refuse le droit d'hériter à part égale avec les hommes, permet qu'on les répudie, octroie aux hommes tous les droits. Toutes ces questions majoritairement admises comme des fondements du Sacré dans l'imaginaire musulman sont-elles structurelles à l'islam en tant

Nowadays, the issue of women, in general, and of Muslim women in particular, is at the centre of all debates on modernity, universal values and the "living together" of globalised contemporary societies. And in that context, of loco-regional initiatives, following the example of the Union for the Mediterranean, these debates are essential in order to overcome the things that go unsaid, the misunderstandings and the stereotypes on both sides, and to establish a genuine space for sincere and constructive dialogue beyond geographical and cultural boundaries.

Indeed, and in a very exaggerated way, it can be noted that the issue of Islamic women continues to be taken hostage between a largely mediated and trivialised Islamophobia, and a political-cultural patriarchy which is still significant within Muslim societies and communities. **Muslim women are therefore still the target of recurrent controversial**

debates, within their societies and elsewhere, and are generally exploited by policies which are most often made without their input, or even without their knowledge.

Despite the difficulty nowadays of making a distinction between an exploited Islam on all sides, and a xenophobic ideology which is increasingly evident, it turns out that another route can indeed be taken. A route far from all these extreme ideologies, whether they be those of geopolitics, ultraliberal consumerism, globalised misogyny embodied by the resurgence of political populisms on all sides, or that of the horror of religious extremism in the name of Islam errant of its spiritual ethics.

Islam allows polygamy, imposes the submission of women to men, veils women, refuses them the right to inherit equally alongside men, allows women to be repudiated and grants all the rights to men. Are all these questions, mostly accepted as fundamentals

que révélation spirituelle? Sont-elles transcrites dans le texte coranique lui-même ou bien s'agit-il d'une interprétation – humaine – du texte, reproduite dans des compilations théologiques à travers l'histoire ?

Pour y répondre, il est impératif aujourd'hui de déconstruire au préalable l'approche traditionaliste encore de mise aujourd'hui afin d'initier une lecture réformatrice à même de nous offrir de nouvelles clés de lecture de cette problématique. Il s'agit de prime abord de faire la distinction entre l'islam spirituel, celui du Texte comme source révélé, et celui de l'islam institutionnel des oulémas, exégètes, théologiens des différentes écoles juridiques et courants idéologiques qui ont structuré historiquement la pensée islamique.

Il est donc essentiel de distinguer entre ces différentes catégories de lectures afin de saisir ce que dit vraiment le Message spirituel, ce qu'il ne dit pas mais aussi et surtout ce qu'on lui fait dire depuis des siècles ! C'est ainsi, que l'on peut démontrer, arguments à l'appui, que la majorité des interprétations médiévales classiques ont été le produit de leur milieu social et culturel et se sont construites à la marge, et en allant parfois à

l'encontre des nombreuses latitudes accordées par les Textes scripturaires.

En effet, il se trouve que sur cette question des femmes, il y a un décalage conséquent entre ce que prône le message spirituel de l'islam et la majorité des lectures interprétatives, notamment celles du droit musulman ou Fiqh qui sont majoritairement discriminatoires et sont devenues avec le temps et l'imitation aveugle (taqlîd), des récits sacralisés.

En redonnant la priorité aux sources textuelles, et notamment à la dimension éthique du Message spirituel, il s'avère que les sempiternels interdits religieux que l'on nous sort à chaque occasion n'existent tout simplement pas dans le Texte lui-même, mais dans la longue tragédie historique d'une lecture du religieux restée otage de ses propres dérives sociopolitiques.

Cette nouvelle lecture réformatrice nous permet aussi de mettre en évidence au sein du référentiel islamique quatre dimensions essentielles que la lecture traditionaliste majoritaire n'a jamais prise en compte

of the Sacred right in the Muslim imagination, structural to Islam as spiritual revelation? Are they transcribed in the Koran text itself or is it a matter of human interpretation of the text, reproduced in theological compilations throughout history?

To respond to these questions, nowadays it is essential to deconstruct beforehand the traditional approach still in place today in order to initiate a reformist interpretation to provide us with new keys to interpreting this issue. It is a question of *prima facie* making the distinction between spiritual Islam, that of the Text as the revealed source, and that of institutional Islam of the ulama, exegetes, theologians of different legal schools and ideological trends which have historically structured Islamic thought.

It is therefore essential to distinguish between these different categories of interpretations in order to understand what the spiritual Message really says, what it does not say, but also and especially what it

has been believed to say for centuries! That is how, as can be demonstrated, supporting arguments, of which the majority are classic medieval interpretations, have been the product of their social and cultural environment and are constructed on the fringes of society, and sometimes going against the many freedoms granted by the scriptural texts.

Indeed, it turns out that on this issue of women, there is a resulting difference between what the spiritual message of Islam preaches and the majority of interpretative readings, notably those of the Muslim right or Fiqh which are mostly discriminatory and have become sacred recitals (taqlîd) over time and with blind imitation.

By giving the priority back to the textual sources, and notably to the ethical dimension of the spiritual Message, it is shown that the eternal religious taboos that come out at each opportunity simply do not exist in the Text itself, but in the long

et qui sont : la dimension éthique spirituelle qui constitue l'essentiel du Texte, la dimension humaniste symbolisée par le concept de l'être humain (însan), une dimension égalitaire conceptuelle et normative mise en évidence à travers plus de vingt versets et une dernière dimension socio-conjoncturelle, qui doit être remise dans le contexte historique de l'époque.

La nouvelle approche réformatrice a permis de démontrer que sur 6232 versets, il y a plus ou moins 6 versets - qui ont fait la réputation de l'islam - tels que : **la polygamie, voile, répudiation, tutelle juridique de l'homme sur la femme, témoignage, et demi part de l'héritage**. Il reste cependant vrai, que ces versets, extirpés du cadre éthique de l'ensemble de la vision coranique et soumis à des interprétations et lectures littéralistes voire discriminatoires, ont largement participé à entretenir la vision péjorative d'une religion qui opprime les femmes et où la notion d'égalité est quasi absente.

En effet, les juristes musulmans ont marginalisé l'éthique universelle et les valeurs socles des textes scripturaires et ont interprété ces quelques versets

conjoncturels à l'aune de leur propre société et mentalité patriarcale de l'époque où les notions de justice et d'égalité, n'avaient pas le sens qu'elles ont aujourd'hui.

C'est donc à travers les valeurs socles du message spirituel, telles que la libération humaine, l'égalité de tous les êtres humains, la liberté de conviction, les impératifs de justice, du savoir, de la raison, le respect de la diversité humaine qu'il faudrait savoir réinterpréter aujourd'hui la thématique des femmes et l'appréhender comme une thématique au cœur de l'exigence spirituelle de la libération des êtres humains.

Cette nouvelle approche réformatrice est encore certes minoritaire au sein du monde musulman mais il reste évident aujourd'hui que l'on assiste à l'émergence d'une véritable conscience féminine musulmane, au sein des sociétés arabo-musulmanes mais aussi des communautés et des minorités musulmanes vivant en Occident.

historical tragedy of an interpretation of friars who have remained hostage of their own socio-political excesses.

This new reformist interpretation also allows us to highlight four essential dimensions within the Islamic frame of reference that the mainly traditional interpretation has never taken into account. These are: the spiritual ethical dimension which constitutes the essential elements of the Text, the humanist dimension symbolised by the concept of the human being (însan), a conceptual and normative equality dimension brought to light through more than twenty verses and a final socio-cyclical dimension, which must be put back into the historical context of the era.

The new reformist approach has made it possible to demonstrate that, out of 6232 verses, there are more or less 6 verses which have made Islam's reputation, such as: **polygamy, veil, repudiation,**

legal supervision of men over women, testimony and half of the inheritance. However, it is still true that these verses, removed of the ethical framework of the overall vision of the Koran and subjected to literal, or even discriminatory, readings, have largely participated in maintaining a pejorative vision of a religion which oppresses women and where the notion of equality is virtually non-existent.

Indeed, Muslim lawyers have marginalised universal ethics and the base values of scriptural texts and have interpreted these few cyclical verses in light of their own patriarchal society and mentality of the era where notions of justice and equality did not have the meaning that they have today.

It is therefore through the base values of the spiritual message, such as human liberation, equality of all human beings, freedom of belief, the imperatives of justice, knowledge and reason, and respect of human

En effet, un véritable travail de recherche académique et théologique est en train de prendre forme et stipule clairement que le discours sur l'égalité entre hommes et femmes est complètement valide de l'intérieur de l'islam et que les sources scripturaires de l'islam ne constituent en aucun cas une entrave à l'instauration des droits égalitaires entre hommes et femmes .

La réforme de la pensée et de la tradition islamique est une obligation éthique et morale et non pas parce qu'on nous l'ordonne. C'est au nom des principes même de l'islam dévoyés et usurpés par la lecture de l'idéologie politique qu'il faut aujourd'hui s'atteler à corriger cette inversion de valeurs entérinée par des siècles de décadence.

Il s'agit donc d'offrir aux musulmans et musulmanes de nouvelles grilles de lecture d'un religieux transformé en une véritable éthique, qui peut être vécu non plus comme une identité figée de résistance et de refus de l'autre, mais comme une profonde spiritualité libératrice.

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diversity, that it must be known how to reinterpret nowadays the topic of women and understand it as a topic at the heart of the spiritual requirement for the liberation of human beings.

This new reformist approach is still certainly in minority within the Muslim world, but it is still clear today that we are witnessing the emergence of a genuine Muslim female awareness within Arab-Muslim societies, but also within communities and Muslim minorities living in the West.

In fact, a true academic and theological research work is in the process of taking shape and clearly stipulates that the discourse on gender equality is completely valid from within Islam and that the scriptural sources of Islam do not constitute in any case an obstacle to the establishment of equal rights between men and women .



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She is a member of the International Academic Committee of the Musawah Network, a member of the Fatéma Mernissi Chair at Mohammed V University in Rabat and a member of the Moroccan National Committee on Education and Culture.

She is also the author of numerous articles, essays and books such as: "Le féminisme islamique, un mouvement en expansion qui rejette le modèle occidental d'émancipation" or "Croyantes et féministes : un autre regard sur les religions ».

The reform of Islamic thought and tradition is an ethical and moral obligation and not because they are imposing it on us. It is in the name of the very principles of Islam, errant and usurped by the interpretation of political ideology, that the issue of correcting this reversal of values embodied in centuries of decadence must be addressed.

Muslim men and women must therefore be offered new working frameworks of a religion transformed into real ethics, which may be experienced not only as an identity fixed with resistance and rejection of others, but also as a profound liberating spirituality.

Encouraging massive, committed investment in rural women

- *Cosimo Lacirignola, Secretary General of the International Center for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies*

Travailler sur l'autonomisation et le renforcement des femmes dans les territoires ruraux et agricoles, c'est avant tout chercher à comprendre les rapports sociaux entre les femmes et les hommes, la construction des rôles des uns et des autres. C'est comprendre comment les assignations à identité se construisent et freinent parfois. C'est analyser les ressorts de l'émancipation.

Ce n'est jamais opposer les uns aux autres... au contraire il s'agit de rechercher les dénominateurs communs, les renforcer et les faire porter de manière collective afin que les effets positifs de cette démarche bénéficient à tous.

Travailler sur l'autonomisation et le renforcement des femmes, c'est donc donner corps aux valeurs que sont l'équité, le respect, l'altruisme et l'ouverture.

Dans l'espace méditerranéen cette approche inclusive est une nécessité. Dans les espaces les plus fragiles, les plus en risque, elle est une obligation.

Working to enhance women's empowerment and boost the role of women in rural and agricultural communities means, first and foremost, seeking to understand social relationships between men and women and the shaping of both gender roles. It means understanding how identity is assigned, how it is constructed and how it sometimes holds people back. It means analysing the drivers of emancipation.

It means avoiding opposing each other and, instead, involves seeking common denominators, reinforcing them and speaking about them in a collective way so that the positive effects of this approach benefit everyone.

As a result, working to enhance and empower women means striving to give substance to values including equality, respect, selflessness and openness.

This inclusive approach is a necessity in the Mediterranean area. In the most fragile and dangerous areas, it is a duty.

En Méditerranée se concentrent et s'accumulent de nombreux défis environnementaux, climatiques, économiques et sociaux. Pour espérer les relever ou du moins atténuer leurs chocs inhérents, la participation de toutes les forces vives est nécessaire. Parmi ces forces, il y a ces jeunes filles en devenir et ces femmes des mondes ruraux et agricoles. Il y a également les jeunes hommes, les petits agriculteurs et pêcheurs qui sont particulièrement vulnérables et pour lesquels le CIHEAM s'investit depuis sa création en 1962. Notre mission consiste à rapprocher le monde de la recherche des problématiques vécues par ces populations et de trouver des solutions concrètes en mobilisant nos activités de formation, la recherche en réseau, l'assistance technique et le dialogue politique.

Actrices sociales et économiques au potentiel entravé, les femmes des mondes ruraux et agricoles jouent un rôle qui reste aujourd'hui encore méconnu et sous-estimé. Temps de travail domestique ou informel non comptabilisé et non valorisé ; inégalités d'accès aux ressources éducatives, financières et

Many environmental, climatic, economic and social challenges are accumulating and are concentrated in the Mediterranean. If these challenges are to be tackled or their inherent impacts mitigated at the very least, all stakeholders must play their part. Among such stakeholders are aspiring young women and women from rural and agricultural backgrounds. Young men, small-scale farmers and fishers are also particularly vulnerable, and the CIHEAM has invested in them since its creation in 1962. Our mission involves bringing the world of research closer to the problems experienced by these communities and finding concrete solutions by boosting our training activities, network based research, technical assistance and political dialogue.

Women from rural and agricultural backgrounds are key social and economic actors whose potential has been hindered, and the role they play remains largely unknown and underestimated. Time spent on domestic or informal work not taken into account or valued; unequal access to educational,

foncières ; mobilité limitée ; faible représentativité dans les espaces de décisions... qu'il s'agisse de freins directs ou indirects, de discriminations légales ou de pressions socio-culturelles, ces pénalités liées au sexe, exposent davantage les femmes à la pauvreté et la précarité et les fragilisent davantage en période de crises.

Ces femmes jouent pourtant un rôle clé dans la résilience des territoires. Elles constituent une main d'œuvre agricole précieuse et participent à maintenir un écosystème économique et social local. En Afrique sub-saharienne, les agricultrices contribuent à la production de 80 % des denrées alimentaires de base. Elles participent à nourrir leur famille, la communauté et le village. C'est un élément non négligeable, à l'heure où les insécurités alimentaires refont surface notamment aggravées par les chocs climatiques, la raréfaction des ressources naturelles telle que l'eau et la dégradation accrue des sols.

En Méditerranée, les femmes restent les principales responsables du choix et de la préparation des

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financial, and land resources; limited mobility; weak representation in decision-making spheres... these are all either direct or indirect obstacles, legal discrimination, or socio-cultural pressures. Such gender-based penalties place many women at greater risk of poverty and hardship and undermine them even more during times of crises.

Yet women play a key role in the resilience of such communities. They represent a valuable agricultural workforce and play their part in maintaining a local economic and social ecosystem. In sub-Saharan Africa, female farmers contribute to the production of 80% of staple food products. They contribute to feeding their families, community and village. It is an important mainstay at a time when food insecurity is re-emerging and has been particularly exacerbated by climate shocks, the scarcity of natural resources such as water and increased land degradation.

In the Mediterranean, women remain the main decision makers and preparers of food. As a



Fascinated by the Mediterranean region and agriculture, Cosimo Lacirignola is an agricultural engineer. After having been a civil servant at the European Commission, from 1983 to 1987 he became Senior Administrator of the CIHEAM Intergovernmental Organization. He then took over the management of the Agronomic Institute of Bari (Italy) until 2013 when he became the new Secretary General of CIHEAM.

Cosimo Lacirignola has enabled the development of several training, research and cooperation projects in the Mediterranean area and in other regions of the world. Today, he is responsible for maintaining multilateral cooperation, scientific and cultural diplomacy, partnerships and political dialogue at its best, in the service of sustainable agricultural development, food and nutritional security, environmental protection and inclusive growth in the Mediterranean.

aliments. Elles sont donc au cœur de la sécurité nutritionnelle de la famille, de l'éducation alimentaire et de la prévention santé. Ce rôle est d'autant plus important qu'en raison d'une transition nutritionnelle accélérée, les pays de la région sont de plus en plus confrontés à l'obésité et aux maladies liées à l'alimentation telles que le diabète, l'hypertension, les troubles cardiovasculaires alors même que subsiste la malnutrition dans certaines régions.

Les femmes sont fréquemment les gardiennes de savoirs traditionnels relatifs aux plantes et espèces indigènes. Ces femmes sont dotées d'une expertise précieuse en matière d'hybridations et d'adaptations d'espèces végétales ou même animales. Mais faute de transmission adéquate aux nouvelles générations, ces savoirs pourraient disparaître. En Méditerranée, elles sont par exemple, dépositaires d'un patrimoine culinaire ancestral, « la diète méditerranéenne ». En grande partie à base de céréales, d'huiles végétales et de légumes, la « diète méditerranéenne » a un impact faible sur l'environnement mais important

sur le développement local. Cette diète contribue à la préservation de la biodiversité. Elle est aussi pourvoyeuse d'emplois durables. Agro-écologie, pêche responsable, restauration, gastronomie, agrotourisme... la « diète méditerranéenne » est à plusieurs niveaux stratégiques pour la région et les femmes en sont une composante centrale qu'il faut davantage soutenir et former.

Enfin, les femmes sont souvent plus à l'aise avec l'esprit d'innovation dans les domaines techniques, économiques ou organisationnels. Elles se distinguent par une forte capacité à développer des solidarités locales et à transmettre de bonnes pratiques. Les femmes entrepreneures sont aussi un maillon précieux de la chaîne agricole. Elles innovent, créent de la richesse et de la valeur sociale ajoutée. Ces activités se font souvent dans l'ombre et il nous appartient de contribuer à l'émergence de modèles féminins de réussite dans les milieux ruraux.

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consequence, women lie at the heart of a family's food security, food education and health prevention. This role is becoming increasingly important due to an accelerated nutritional transition where the region's countries are facing more and more cases of obesity and diseases linked to nutrition, such as diabetes, hypertension and vascular diseases, while cases of malnutrition still exist in certain regions.

Women are often the guardians of traditional knowledge in relation to indigenous plants and species. Such women are blessed with valuable expertise in relation to the hybridisation and adaptation of plant or even animal species. But due to a lack of adequate transfer to newer generations, this knowledge could disappear. For example, women are custodians of an ancestral culinary heritage in the Mediterranean, known as the "Mediterranean diet". Based largely on grains, vegetable oils and vegetables, the "Mediterranean diet" has little impact on the environment while being important for local development. This diet contributes to the conservation of biodiversity. It

also creates long-term employment. Agroecology, responsible fishing, the catering industry, gastronomy and agrotourism... the "Mediterranean diet" sits at several strategic levels in the region and women are a key component and must be provided with more training and support.

Finally, women are often more at ease with innovation in technical, economic and organisational domains. Women are characterised by their strong capacity to develop local support networks and to teach others about good practices. Entrepreneurial women are also a valuable link in the agricultural chain. They innovate, create wealth and provide added social value. These activities are often overshadowed and it is up to us to help encourage the emergence of successful female models within rural areas.

Several of the projects covered by the CIHEAM help to improve the social and economic status of rural women and female farmers, particularly through training and by focusing on improving

Parmi les projets portés par le CIHEAM, nombreux participent à améliorer le statut social et économique des femmes rurales et agricultrices, notamment grâce à la formation et en se focalisant sur l'amélioration de leur employabilité. Nous développons des outils pour l'inclusion des femmes dans la gouvernance des politiques alimentaires et agricoles. Nous participons à favoriser les échanges d'expériences et travaillons au maintien du dialogue institutionnel avec les pays méditerranéens au niveau local, national et régional. **S'il est important de féminiser l'agriculture et de renforcer la place des femmes dans les zones rurales, il est aussi important de simultanément contribuer à féminiser les filières scientifiques dans lesquels sont développées les solutions aux problèmes rencontrés en Méditerranée.** Au CIHEAM, nous travaillons à renforcer la participation des femmes dans nos activités de recherches au sein de nos instituts agronomiques. Nous sommes, en effet, convaincus que les chercheuses représentent le socle de l'avenir en Méditerranée et qu'elles ont beaucoup à apporter dans le développement

des territoires ruraux, la gestion des ressources naturelles, la sécurité alimentaire et la nutrition, les systèmes de production agricole innovants ou encore dans la pêche et l'aquaculture durables.

Mieux valoriser le rôle des femmes et renforcer leur capacité d'action dans la sphère publique et professionnelle, c'est réussir la construction d'un espace solide dans lequel les femmes verront leurs conditions de vies améliorées au bénéfice de la société dans son ensemble.

Pour autant, il reste encore beaucoup à faire pour permettre aux femmes de déployer tout leur potentiel et pour faire valoir leurs compétences. Nous y travaillons au CIHEAM et nous invitons nos partenaires à un investissement massif et engagé dans cette cause.

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their employability. We are developing tools to include women in the governance of food and agricultural policies. We are engaged in boosting mutual learning and we are working to maintain institutional dialogue with Mediterranean countries on a local, national and regional level. **While it is important to increase female representation in agriculture and reinforce the role of women in rural areas, it is also important to simultaneously contribute to increasing female representation in scientific fields where solutions to problems found in the Mediterranean are developed.** At CIHEAM, we are working on strengthening the participation of women in our research activities within our agronomic institutes. Indeed, we are convinced that female researchers are the cornerstone for the future in the Mediterranean and that they have a great deal to contribute to the development of rural communities, the management of natural resources, food security and nutrition, innovative agricultural production systems and even sustainable fishing and aquaculture.

Placing greater value on the role of women and reinforcing their ability to act in public and professional spheres will lead to successfully building a solid space where women will see their living conditions improve for the benefit of society as a whole.

Even so, much remains to be done to enable women to manifest their full potential and to take advantage of their skills. We are working on it at CIHEAM and we invite our stakeholders to invest massively and become involved in this cause.

Promoting gender equality in the Mediterranean: a priority that has become obvious!

- Delphine Borione, Permanent Representative of France to the Food and Agriculture Organization

Servir l'Union pour la Méditerranée pendant quatre belles et riches années a été pour moi une joie et un honneur. Je suis arrivée à Barcelone en avril 2013, au milieu de la préparation de la Conférence ministérielle de l'UpM sur « le renforcement du rôle des femmes dans la société ». Aucune conférence ministérielle UpM ne s'était tenue depuis 2011 et les incertitudes étaient grandes sur notre capacité collective de pouvoir aboutir à un texte agréé par tous. Malgré les difficultés rencontrées, la volonté commune d'arriver à un consensus sur ce sujet si important a prévalu.

La Conférence de Paris se tint le 11 septembre 2013, précédée par une rencontre à l'Élysée avec le président de la République française, et l'adoption d'un texte très complet, assorti d'engagements forts des gouvernements de traiter l'ensemble des questions liées à l'autonomisation des femmes : accroître la participation des femmes dans la vie politique, économique et sociale ; lutter contre les violences et les discriminations ; favoriser le

changement des stéréotypes par l'éducation et les médias. La Déclaration créait pour la première fois un mécanisme de suivi avec l'engagement des États de faire rapport sur les progrès accomplis et demandait au Secrétariat de l'UpM de promouvoir des projets opérationnels.

En charge de la division « affaires sociales et société civile », et avec le plein soutien du secrétaire général Fathallah Sijilmassi et du Conseil exécutif de l'UpM sous la co-présidence de l'Union Européenne et de la Jordanie, j'ai concentré notre action sur le renforcement de la place des femmes dans les sociétés. Il est apparu pour moi en effet comme une évidence que cette question n'était pas seulement bénéfique pour les femmes.

L'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes est un droit humain fondamental. Elle est indispensable au développement et à la coopération dans notre région euro-méditerranéenne. Elle est la condition du

Serving the Union for the Mediterranean for the past four wonderful and rich years has been a joy and an honour for me. I came to Barcelona in April 2013, in the midst of preparations for the UfM Ministerial Conference on "Strengthening the Role of Women in Society". No other UfM Ministerial Conference had taken place since 2011 and there was great uncertainty about our collective ability to succeed in drawing up a declaration supported by all parties. Despite the difficulties encountered, the shared desire to reach a consensus on such an important subject prevailed.

Preceded by a meeting at the Élysée Palace with the President of the French Republic, the Paris Conference was held on 11 September 2013. The Conference resulted in the adoption of a comprehensive declaration, accompanied by strong commitments from governments to deal with a whole range of questions linked to women's empowerment: to increase the participation of women in political, economic and social spheres;

to fight against violence and discrimination, and to encourage changing stereotypes through education and the media. For the first time, the declaration created a follow-up mechanism which obliged States parties to report on progress made, and it required the UfM Secretariat to promote operational projects.

Responsible for the "Social and Civil Affairs" Division and with the full support of Secretary General Fathallah Sijilmassi and the UfM Executive Council under the co-presidency of the European Union and Jordan, I focused our actions on strengthening women's place within society.

Indeed it seemed obvious to me that this issue was not only beneficial for women. Gender equality is a fundamental human right. It is essential for development and cooperation in our Euro-Mediterranean region. It is a condition of progress and fulfilment for inclusive and peaceful societies.

progrès et de l'épanouissement de sociétés inclusives et apaisées.

Réaliser pleinement les droits des femmes et leur donner un égal accès à toutes les opportunités est donc une réponse majeure aux enjeux de notre région.

Nous avons ainsi progressivement construit la stratégie de l'UpM dans le domaine de l'autonomisation des femmes.

D'abord avec des projets concrets. Le premier projet lancé à l'UpM en avril 2013 "Jeunes femmes créatrices d'emploi" avait le mérite d'aborder trois dimensions essentielles : les femmes, la jeunesse, la création d'emploi. Ont suivi de nombreux autres projets traitant de formation professionnelle, d'éducation des jeunes à l'égalité et à la citoyenneté, d'entrepreneuriat féminin, de prévention du cancer des femmes, ou enfin de la construction d'outils communs pour renforcer

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Granting women their full rights and giving them equal access to all opportunities should therefore be a key response to our region's challenges.

We have therefore progressively built the UfM's strategy around the subject of women's empowerment, first and foremost with concrete projects. The first project launched by the UfM in April 2013, titled "Young Women as Job Creators", had the benefit of addressing three essential dimensions: women, young people and job creation. Several other projects followed that, among others, tackled vocational training, the education of young people in equality and citizenship issues, women entrepreneurship, cancer prevention in women, and finally, in partnership with the Euro-Mediterranean Women's Foundation, the construction of common tools to strengthen the capabilities of women. Another challenge has also been that of "mainstreaming", i.e., using this approach to equality in other priority areas of the Secretariat: business development, higher education and research, water



Delphine Borione is a French diplomat who has held numerous bilateral and multilateral positions in the areas of sustainable development and economic, cultural and educational cooperation. After being Senior Deputy Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), from 2013 to July 2017, she is now ambassador, Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations organizations in Rome (FAO, WFP and IFAD). She was the first ambassador of France to Kosovo (2007-2009), director of cultural policy and French at Quai d'Orsay and technical adviser to President Jacques Chirac at the Elysée. Delphine Borione is a former student of the Ecole Nationale d'Administration and a graduate of Sciences Po Paris. She is the author of numerous articles on the environment and climate change, culture, the role of women and Kosovo.

les capacités des femmes avec la Fondation des femmes de l'Euro-Méditerranée. Autre enjeu aussi, celui du « mainstreaming » : inclure l'approche de la parité dans les autres secteurs prioritaires du Secrétariat : développement des entreprises, enseignement supérieur et recherche, eau et environnement, transport et développement urbain, énergie et changements climatiques, etc.

Le deuxième axe a été un travail sur les politiques publiques, à travers le lancement d'un dialogue régional sur l'autonomisation des femmes en mai 2015, avec la participation des pays membres de l'UpM, mais aussi d'acteurs régionaux ou internationaux. L'objectif était de préparer un rapport sur la mise en œuvre des engagements adoptés par la Conférence ministérielle de Paris en 2013, d'identifier les difficultés et les contraintes (et il y en a tant !!), de rassembler les bonnes pratiques, d'améliorer la coopération régionale, de renforcer la complémentarité entre les acteurs, et de formuler des recommandations en vue d'une déclaration

ministérielle plus précise et opérationnelle en 2017. Ce processus enthousiasmant a bénéficié d'une appropriation et un fort engagement des Etats membres et de nos partenaires, et permis la rédaction d'un Rapport de progrès extrêmement dense qui sera une base solide pour la Conférence du Caire de novembre 2017.

Jouant aussi notre rôle de plateforme régionale, nous avons aussi organisé chaque année à Barcelone une Conférence de haut niveau sur l'autonomisation des femmes, visant à aborder les problématiques les plus actuelles ou sensibles : la promotion de l'entrepreneuriat féminin, l'impact des nouvelles technologies, le rôle des femmes dans le changement climatique et le développement durable, la lutte contre l'extrémisme et la radicalisation, la mobilité et la migration, etc.. A chaque édition, des personnalités politiques ou économiques, des experts, des responsables d'organisations, des acteurs et actrices de terrain, ont ainsi partagé leur expérience personnelle et

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and the environment, urban development and transportation, energy and climate change, etc.

The second approach has involved working on public policies through the launch of a regional dialogue on women's empowerment in May 2015. The UfM Member States as well as regional and international stakeholders have participated in this dialogue. The aim was to prepare a report on the implementation of commitments adopted by the UfM Ministerial Conference in Paris in 2013 to identify difficulties and constraints (of which there are many!), collate good practices, improve regional cooperation, strengthen synergies between stakeholders, and formulate recommendations for the purposes of a more precise operational ministerial declaration in 2017. This exciting process has been adopted and it has been further bolstered by a strong commitment given by UfM Member States and our partners. Furthermore, an extremely comprehensive progress report has been written which will act as a solid basis for the Cairo Conference in November 2017.

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Using our role as a regional platform for dialogue and cooperation, we have furthermore organised a high-level conference in Barcelona each year on women's empowerment, seeking to tackle the most current and sensitive issues: the promotion of women entrepreneurship, the impact of new technologies, the role of women in climate change and sustainable development, the fight against extremism and radicalisation, mobility and migration, etc. Each edition has seen political or economic personalities, experts, organisational leads and grassroot-level representatives share their personal and collective experiences, shed light on complex challenges, debate solutions and decide together on the actions to be taken.

In order to advance the regional agenda on women, the UfM Secretariat has finally formed partnerships with multiple stakeholders, such as international organisations, using an open and inclusive approach, by creating regional networks and strengthening coherence and synergies between actions. The

collective, éclairé les enjeux si complexes, débattu des solutions, et décidé ensemble d'actions à mener.

Pour faire avancer l'agenda régional sur les femmes, le secrétariat de l'UpM a enfin créé des partenariats avec de multiples acteurs et organisations nationales ou internationales, selon une approche ouverte et inclusive, en créant des réseaux régionaux et en renforçant la cohérence et la complémentarité des actions. Parmi ces partenaires principaux se trouvent bien sûr l'Union européenne, l'ONU Femmes, le PNUD, l'OIT, ONUDI, l'UNESCO, l'Assemblée parlementaire de l'UpM, l'ARLEM, le Conseil de l'Europe, etc., ainsi que des acteurs du secteur privé et de la société civile.

J'ai récemment quitté le secrétariat de l'UpM mais je sais – une évidence aussi désormais !- que je continuerai à promouvoir le rôle des femmes dans mes nouvelles fonctions auprès de la FAO, du PAM et du FIDA. Je sais aussi que la division

SCA «affaires sociales et société civile » sous l'impulsion de Laurence País qui m'a succédé et avec toute la compétence de l'équipe composée de Fatiha Hassouni, Meriem El-Hilali et Juli Hernandez et des collègues du Secrétariat, continuera d'agir avec détermination pour renforcer la coopération régionale en Méditerranée en promouvant le rôle des femmes comme acteurs de changement, décideurs politiques, moteurs de croissance inclusive et porte-parole de nos sociétés.

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main partners include, of course, the European Union, UN Women, UNDP, ILO, UNIDO, UNESCO, Parliamentary Assembly of the UfM, ARLEM, the European Council, and various private sector and civil society stakeholders.

I recently stepped down from the UfM Secretariat but I know that I will also obviously continue to promote the role of women in my new roles with the FAO, PAM and FIDA. I also know that the "Social and Civil Affairs" (SCA) Division, under the direction of Laurence País who has taken over from me, and with all the capabilities of the team comprising Fatiha Hassouni, Meriem El-Hilali, Juli Hernandez and colleagues from the Secretariat, will continue to act decisively to strengthen regional cooperation in the Mediterranean by promoting the role of women as agents of change, policy makers, drivers of inclusive growth and spokeswomen for our societies.

Gender equality in the Mediterranean and the EU: Challenges and Recommendations

- *Sanem Oktar, President of KAGIDER, Turkey*

Women Entrepreneurs Association of Turkey, KAGIDER, is the most influential woman business association with over 300 members having 1,6 billion dollar annual turnover. KAGIDER, since its establishment in 2002, works for women empowerment through increasing women's participation to workforce and women entrepreneurship. For KAGIDER, women's economic empowerment is key to the realisation of women's rights, and achieving a truly gender equal world. Economically empowered women have access to decent work, control over economic resources and manage their own time, participate in economic decision-making at all levels, and can access quality public services.

The wide range of the challenges in the Mediterranean countries varying from democratic transition to sustainable, social and economic development call us all for an ambitious global response. The European Union with its own agenda

and challenges is meeting at the crossroads with similar challenges and should be able to use all its instruments and policies not only to address them but also to pave the way for civil society organisations and institutions working on the ground with grassroots. Full gender equality and women's empowerment in the region involves local, regional and national compliance with the laws and in favour of women's social, economic and political participation. Therefore the role UfM, together with all partners in the region, is ground changing and very crucial which needs to be strengthened with all the support and commitment that it could get from EU Institutions and national and underline their effect on gender equality and provide gender inclusive political solutions to those crises will not only contribute to peace and stability in the Mediterranean region but also would provide key solutions to the common challenges in the neighbouring countries and in the EU on areas as migration, security and energy efficiency.



The UfM projects are fostering women's economic empowerment in Jordan and all over the region.

At all levels, international, EU or regional the targeted goals around Agenda 2030 in particular on SDG 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls) should ideally bring all efforts to the core of the political and legal framework of the national and regional policies and actions . From a pure economic perspective narrowing gender gaps in work and in society would give the world economy a significant boost. As MGI's research suggests that, in a scenario in which every country matched the fastest progress toward gender parity made within its region, \$12 trillion could be added to global GDP in 2025 . To be able to widen the impact of the policy tools existing in the EU and in international level, we need to combine common challenges and common tools with a specific country tailored made as we share the similar obstacles globally, acting locally with universal set minds will be the key to overcome the challenges effectively.

Addressing socio-economic inequalities between and within countries, owing partly to the high unemployment rate, is a key concern for our economy. The number of women business owners worldwide is 392 million and for every 100 male business owners around the world, there are only 69 female business owners . Women business owners make up the majority of entrepreneurs in the informal sector and a large share of the micro-enterprise sector. As of March 1 2017, in Turkey there were 256,992 women business owners, compared to 190,382 in 2013, and the share of women entrepreneurs rose 15 percent from 12.7 percent over the same period . Yet, despite their extraordinary contributions to socio-economic development, women continue to be marginalized in many countries around the world. There is still so much work to do all together as we are holding our future in our hands. Our future depends on how we economically empower women and girls.



Born in İzmir, Turkey, Sanem Oktar graduated from Marmara University in International Relations. She established her first company Tribeca Communication Consultancy in 1997. In order to expand her marketing services business, she later founded her database marketing company, directComm in 2000. She lastly founded Limonsocial Social Media Agency in 2011. She was one of the Top Ten Women Entrepreneurs of Turkey in 2010 and was selected one of the 8 as Women To Watch in 2016. She was also one of the 12 founding members of Turkish Direct Marketing Association (TDMA) in 2005 and served as the President and Head of Board 2007-2009. She has been an active member of KAGIDER, the Women Entrepreneurs Association of Turkey since 2010 and has volunteered in many women empowerment projects. In May 2015, she has been elected as the President of KAGIDER. She is also a member of W20 Steering Committee.

Challenges

- The lack of adequate implementation of legislation is an important barrier for women (for example challenges at hiring, promotion, and, gender pay gap) exist.
- Lack of work-life balance, childcare and elderly care, problems with commuting to work, and difficulties in accessing financing in order to start a business constitute significant obstacles.
- The socio-cultural norms around women, their place in family and society, and resulting discrimination in workplaces that causes discrepancies between the relative gender positions in the labour market.
- Access to education does remain to be a problem.
- The problem of violence against women is exacerbated by the societal concept of women as bearers of family honour and perception of husbands as final decision makers in the family
- Participation in political life, women tend to occupy positions of power (e.g. ministerial ones) far less often than men, and the public is not fully supportive of female leaders.
- In general, governments do not seem to focus on gender-related issues sufficiently, although a number of initiatives, can be found .
- The ability for female entrepreneurs to enter markets and upgrade into higher value activities are hindered by; limited access to finance, lack of knowledge on market information, minimal networking opportunities and tapping into more productive sectors.

Recommendations

- Data gathering, synthesis and dissemination: In-depth, rigorous, and comprehensive analysis of the situation of women in the region is difficult without access to complex, up-to-date data on gender-sensitive issues
- Encouraging coordination between stakeholders- public private partnerships etc.
- Mobilization and identification of actors working in favour of women's empowerment and creating a platform to exchange best practices and perform new projects and ideas together
- Changes in public sentiment by awareness building campaigns need to be designed for each country's specific needs, and should involve local community leaders in order to be effective
- Media: Awareness-raising through the media, particularly television. The use of the media as an independent means to educate the public and to provide information needs to be further exploited.
- Access to finance: Focusing on financial inclusion is crucial not only because it facilitates female labour force participation (by providing access to funding for their businesses) but also due to its improvement of their standing in family and society in general.
- Possible ways of encouraging greater female political participation could include the use of gender quotas, a decentralization of authority and the provision of trainings.
- Capacity and skills development for strengthening entrepreneurial and leadership skills to enhance women's participation in the economy and identifying key entry points for women in target value chains, to ensure woman entrepreneurs' integration and market readiness;
- We should work on how to integrate gender equality in climate change interventions and climate finance .



Women's leadership, a wealth for the regional economy

- Aida Zubčević, President of the National Association of Business Women, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Country Context

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is a middle income country with an estimated 3.8 million inhabitants, still recovering from the war (1992-1995) that devastated the country. Massive post-war changes, such as reconstruction, economic development and social recovery, as well as a shift to market economy, influenced the gender relations and decreased women's access to employment and resources. At present, women in Bosnia and Herzegovina have one of the region's lowest economic activity rates, and live an uncertain reality. They have limited access to employment and face deep-rooted patriarchal stereotypes that marginalize them and exclude them from political and decision-making processes.

The challenges related to women empowerment in the region

In most of the Balkans, including BiH, education is equally available to both men and women, and many women are well educated and competitive in the labor market. However, for women in rural areas opportunities are somewhat limited. These women are still expected to take the more traditional roles and devote their lives to their families and households. Very small percentage of rural women in BiH enroll to university education, while the high-school level education (completed by most) gives them very little or no training that would be useful in their lives, commonly linked to agriculture.

Even in urban areas in BiH, there is a limited entrepreneurial culture, and especially women in business are looked at with reserve. Based on the experiences of the BiH association of business women members, it is safe to conclude that women in BiH lack confidence and have a very low level of risk-taking mentality.

For those that actually break all these barriers and decide to start something on their own, the available support mechanisms and the resources (technical and financial) are still very limited. Some

business development centers and incubators do exist and still emerge in urban areas, but the support in rural regions is rarely available.

Ideas of solutions to advance gender equality with men and women

The association of business women in Bosnia and Herzegovina is planning a campaign to promote positive examples among women entrepreneurs and women in politics. Our goal is to implement a national campaign glorifying women that are changing the traditional women roles in BiH. We strongly believe that such campaign will encourage women's leadership and help advance gender equality in our country.

Furthermore, we have initiated a number of activities aiming to strengthen and educate women through relevant associations and business communities. We recently launched a competition for selecting the best authentic product made by women in rural areas and we are in the process of nationwide mentoring of the 54 organizations that submitted their applications.

Instead of being neglected and left out from the business community, women should be encouraged and supported to assume more responsible roles and lead the changes in the society, as this will have a positive impact on the local economy. One brave woman, determined to start her own business and use her knowledge and skills, over time can create job opportunities for dozens, sometimes hundreds of other women. An association of such business women, can hopefully make a difference in the lives of thousands of women across the country – this is why we have established the BiH association of business women.

Views on the role that the regional frameworks and the UfM can play in strengthening the role of women in societies

When we take a story of one successful woman in Bosnia and Herzegovina and share it with other women around the country, the mindset of the women slowly begins to change. When we show the results of one well managed women association in BiH and promote it in other regions, we encourage and stimulate multiple other associations to expand their services and improve their work. Following these examples, we believe that the regional frameworks and the UfM can further assist us in strengthening the role of women in Bosnia and Herzegovina, by bringing the stories of the best practices and successful models from around the region.

We hope that UfM can help us connect with the regional stakeholders and foster the exchange of positive experiences throughout the region. We are certain that we can learn a lot from positive experiences in the region, as well as that the others could learn something from us.

We also hope that UfM can provide support for vocational training activities in rural areas, which include projects like beekeeping schools for women and the schools for cultivation of medicinal and aromatic plants.

Following the ongoing UfM programs, we also feel that our association should consider developing local and international internship opportunities for girls in rural areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina, hopefully with UfM assistance.



Aida Zubčević was always passionate about natural products and aiding people, so following her degree in pharmaceutical sciences, back in 1988 in Sarajevo, Aida decided to start a private business (processing medicinal and aromatic plants) at a time where entrepreneurship was very poorly developed in former Yugoslavia. Aside from her private business, Aida was very active in initiating the association of business women in Bosnia and Herzegovina and today, she is a president of the National Association of Business Women in BiH. Her work was widely recognized and complimented; she was recently awarded among 42 women nominated from 32 countries, by OXFAM Knowledge Hub for Economic Empowerment of Women (2017).

Women's access to leadership, a driver of change for a stable and prosperous Euro-Mediterranean region

- Clara Gaymard, President of the Women's Forum, France

A la veille du prochain Global Meeting qui se tiendra pour la 1ère fois à Paris au Carrousel du Louvre les 5 et 6 octobre 2017, sur le thème « Oser entreprendre dans un monde en rupture / S'engager pour impacter le monde d'aujourd'hui et de demain », le Women's Forum rassemblera plus de 2000 femmes et hommes d'influence et de valeur pour oser, agir, débattre, innover et porter leur vision dans un monde plein de défis.

Le Women's Forum va au-delà de la question de la parité, sa mission première est d'appréhender les sujets de société avec le regard de toute la société, et donc aussi celui des femmes. **Nous avons besoin de nouveauté, d'élargir le spectre d'idées pour enfin sortir d'une vision traditionnelle et proposer de réelles conditions pour un changement effectif et efficace.** C'est précisément ce à quoi s'engage le Women's Forum : traduire en solutions concrètes les discussions émises lors de l'événement, et suivre les avancées des dirigeantes et dirigeants sur ces sujets qui nous concernent toutes et tous.

Aujourd'hui, on constate encore la quasi absence des femmes dans les postes de décision et dans l'action publique. Certes certains projets, notamment légaux et réglementaires existent mais dans la réalité des faits, les choses ne progressent pas vite. Certes les pays scandinaves sont précurseurs mais si nous n'agissons pas, il faudrait des siècles pour que les femmes obtiennent l'égalité réelle avec les hommes.

Toutes les statistiques et les études le prouvent. Les sociétés, les entreprises et les pays qui pratiquent la parité sont plus prospères et plus harmonieuses que les autres.

Il ne s'agit pas seulement de réparer des injustices séculaires et de rétablir une égalité, mais de permettre une vie meilleure à l'ensemble de la population. Ainsi les mesures prises par les pouvoirs publics pour assurer un équilibre entre la vie professionnelle et familiale bénéficient aussi aux pères. Par exemple, la loi Copé Zimmerman de 2011 qui a imposé la présence de 40% de femmes

On the eve of the next Global Meeting which will be held for the first time in Paris at the Carrousel du Louvre on 5 and 6 October 2017, under the theme "Engage for impact! Daring to lead in a disrupted world", the Women's Forum will bring together over 2000 influential, distinguished women and men, who will challenge, act, debate, innovate and provide their vision in a world that is full of challenges.

The Women's Forum goes far beyond the question of parity, and its primary mission is to grasp the issues affecting the whole of society, and therefore those issues affecting women. **We need innovation in order to expand on ideas so as to eventually escape from traditional views and offer real conditions for efficient and effective change.** This is precisely what the Women's Forum is committed to: translating the discussions that emerge from the event into concrete solutions, and to follow the advances made by female and male leaders in the subjects that matter to us all.

These days, there is still a virtual absence of women in decision-making positions and in public policy-making. Admittedly certain projects do exist, particularly legal and regulatory projects, but the reality is that things are not progressing very quickly. Admittedly, Scandinavian countries are pioneers but if we fail to act, it would take centuries for women to obtain true equality with men.

All the statistics and studies prove it. The societies, businesses and countries that practice gender parity are more prosperous and harmonious than others.

This means not only righting secular injustices and re-establishing equality, but also allowing for a better life for the population as a whole. To that end, the measures taken by public authorities to ensure a balance between professional and family life also benefit fathers. For example, the Copé-Zimmerman Law of 2011, which obliges companies to compose

dans les conseils d'administration a eu trois conséquences très bénéfiques dans la qualité des Conseils : la professionnalisation du recrutement, l'internationalisation et le rajeunissement de leurs membres.

Lorsque nous avons créé RAISE avec Gonzague de Blignières, nous avons imposé la parité du recrutement à tous les niveaux hiérarchiques. Certains nous opposaient que le métier du Private Equity était quasi exclusivement masculin. Aujourd'hui la question ne se pose même plus. Chacun apporte sa compétence et sa personnalité et cette harmonie a une importance déterminante dans notre performance.

Les coopérations régionales qui doivent aussi prendre le leadership de l'autonomisation des femmes. L'Union pour la Méditerranée (UpM) pourrait-elle, mettre en place un agenda régional commun engageant fermement les 43 pays membres a se mobiliser pour accroître dans les faits la participation des femmes dans la vie

politique et économique, aussi bien locale que globale. Dans la région méditerranéenne, le taux de participation des femmes au marché du travail n'est que de 25 %. Une des responsabilités de l'UpM est d'apporter les moyens pour lutter contre ce déséquilibre.

Saluons les actions qui ont déjà été menées. Plusieurs projets de coopération régionale en faveur de l'autonomisation des femmes dans la formation, l'accès au leadership, l'entrepreneuriat, la participation économique, et l'éducation ont été lancés. Le projet « Former des citoyens responsables » par exemple, a largement contribué à la prévention de la violence contre les filles et les femmes par la mise en œuvre d'un programme d'éducation civique rénové au Maroc et en Tunisie. Le projet « Développer l'autonomisation des femmes », promu par la Fondation des Femmes de l'Euro-Méditerranée, a quant à lui permis d'aider localement les femmes, notamment grâce à l'instauration de projets de proximité.

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their boards of at least 40% women, has had three very beneficial effects on the quality of Boards: professionalisation of recruitment, globalisation and younger members.

When we created RAISE with Gonzague de Blignières, we made parity of recruitment obligatory at all hierarchical levels. Some countered with the objection that the role of Private Equity was almost exclusively male. Nowadays the matter is no longer an issue. Every person brings their skills and personality, and this harmony is of crucial importance in our performance.

Regional cooperation must also take the lead in women empowerment. Could the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) implement a common regional agenda that steadfastly engages the 43 member countries to rally together in order to effectively boost the participation of women in economic and political life, both locally and globally? In the

Mediterranean region, women only have a 25% share in the labour market. One of the UfM's responsibilities lies in providing the means to fight against this disparity.

Let us acknowledge the actions that have already been carried out. Several regional cooperation projects have been launched in support of women's empowerment in training, access to leadership, entrepreneurship, economic participation and education. The project "Forming Responsible Citizens" for example, has largely contributed to the prevention of violence against young girls and women by implementing an updated civic education programme in Morocco and Tunisia. The project "Developing Women Empowerment", promoted by the Euro-Mediterranean Women's Foundation, has in turn assisted women on a local level, particularly thanks to the establishment of neighbourhood projects.

Ces initiatives ciblées ouvrent la marche à une protection des femmes, à un accompagnement de celles-ci dans leur insertion sociale, postulat nécessaire à une plus grande stabilité et une meilleure prospérité de ces pays.

Le Women's forum s'inscrit dans cette reconnaissance et ce combat. Il est la plateforme et la caisse de résonance et d'action de tous ceux et celles qui se lèvent, qui osent pour que chacun puisse trouver sa place dans un monde qui change, plein d'opportunités et de menaces et dans lequel les femmes et les hommes de bonne volonté doivent s'unir pour agir.



Clara Gaymard is co-founder of RAISE France, investment and endowment fund. She is also the President of the Women's Forum since 2015.

She was President and CEO of GE France from 2006 to 2016.

Gaymard began her career in 1982 at the City of Paris. She was then Auditor and Referendum Advisor at the Court of Accounts from 1986, then Commercial Counselor at the Economic Expansion Office in Cairo in 1991. In 1995, she became Cabinet Director at the Ministry of Solidarity between Generations. She then led the "SME Mission" until 2003 to the Ministry of Economy and Finance, before being appointed Ambassador Delegate for International Investment and Managing the French Agency for International Investments (AFII).

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These targeted initiatives lead the way in protecting women, providing them support with their integration into society, providing a necessary premise to greater stability and better prosperity for these countries.

The Women's Forum is a part of this recognition and this fight. It acts as a platform and sounding board for action for all men and women who stand up for it, for those who dare so that every person can find their place in a changing world full of opportunities and threats, a world in which women and men must willingly unite to act.



Participants to the seminar "Strengthening the role of women and young people in preventing violent extremism in the Mediterranean region", organized by the UfM together with UNDP and UN Women.

Gender equality needs men and men need equality

- *Ritxar Bacete González, Hombres por la Igualdad*

There is no full democracy without women and equality is not possible without the involvement of men. The great challenge of the 21st century in achieving true human development in the Euro-Mediterranean region inescapably involves devising a regional strategy to bring about a shift in men in all countries towards more equal attitudes and practices, with special emphasis on young men and fathers as well as men who have political responsibilities: responsibility starts with example, commitment and the ability to make decisions.

The 4th Union for the Mediterranean Ministerial Conference to be held in Egypt in November 2017 is an outstanding opportunity and an unmatched setting for achieving the agreements and progress our societies need, and including men in policies and actions that work towards equality is crucial in doing this.

Bringing about change in men is a recognised and global challenge for humanity

The 48th Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in 2004 marked the first time that internationally agreed conclusions have been reached on the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality. The Secretary General of the United Nations published a report describing the struggle for gender equality as a societal responsibility that concerns and should fully engage men as well as women and requires partnerships between women and men.

The Commission called on governments to take a range of measures such as implementing programmes to increase men's ability to bring up their sons and daughters in a way that fosters gender equality, drawing up public information campaigns about the role of men in promoting equality and encouraging men and boys to play an active role in preventing and eliminating all forms of violence, especially violence against women.

The European Union's Roadmap for equality between women and men 2006-2010 says that men should be encouraged to accept their family responsibilities, especially by encouraging them to take parental and paternity leave and share the right to this leave with women. The 2767th meeting of the Council of the European Union recognised that issues related to men and gender equality have not yet been studied in their entirety and urged the Member States to reinforce institutional structures for the promotion of gender equality, both in the public and private sectors, and to also support men's involvement in promoting and achieving gender equality.



The UfM labelled project "Toolbox Project" focuses on selected employment services for young people as pilot examples.

Success stories and best practices

We have more and more success stories and best practices about including men in the fight for equality, even though we still have a long way to go. Let's look at some key examples:

- **IMAGES-MENA.** International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) – Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Global research and action strategy about men and masculinity sponsored by Promundo Global which has been used in over 30 countries around the world.
- **State of the World's Fathers.** An initiative by MenCare International and Promundo to learn about the state of fatherhood in each country and also globally in order to promote actions and involve men in the care and upbringing of girls and boys.
- **Men's Network for Equality in Spain.** A group of men from all over Spain who are publicly and actively committed against sexist violence in all its expressions and work for equality.
- **Men for Equality Programme** from the Basque Institute for Women-EMAKUNDE: Gizonduz. This is a pioneering initiative by the Basque Government to sensitise and train men in equality issues, joint responsibility and the prevention of violence against women.
- **Men in Politics in the Basque Country Research (Spain).** This research is designed to learn about the state of masculinity and views about fairness held by men with positions of political responsibility within institutions. It is supported by the Association of Basque Municipalities-EUDEL and programmed for 2017.



Recommendations

- Devise specific programmes to sensitise and educate men and boys about joint responsibility and the prevention of violence against women and girls, thus promoting participation by society.
- Base actions on scientific evidence: research the state of masculinity in the Euro-Mediterranean region and produce regular publications.
- Involve and train the region's leaders in gender equality: champion a men's lobby for fairness with commitments and specific actions to achieve change in men and drive women and girls' empowerment.
- Promote birth and adoption paternity leave for men as a key aspect for including them in care.
- Implement positive fatherhood programmes by involving fathers in the process of pregnancy, childbirth and upbringing.
- Have resources and an extraordinary budget in place to implement these policies since the inclusion of men should not be to the detriment of measures specifically geared towards women and girls which are already being carried out.

Together we can make it possible!



Ritxar Bacete González is a Senior Fellow at Promundo. He is an independent consultant, educator, researcher, and activist focused on fatherhood and engaging men and boys to promote care, gender equality, and ending violence against women in Spain and Latin America. Along with Promundo and local partners, he is leading the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES), a multi-country study of men and gender equality, in Spain. Ritxar specializes in the implementation, promotion, and coordination of institutional equality programs for men, like the program "Gizonduz" of the Basque Institute for Woman. In 2016 he coordinated the research "The Involvement of the Basque Fathers in the Upbringing of Children" for the Department of Employment of the Basque Government. He is also a member of the Network of Men for Equality in Spain. Ritxar is an anthropologist, social worker, master of gender research and coaching of people and teams, a specialist in development cooperation and applied economics, a writer about masculinities and gender, and above all, a father.



Role models who walk our walk

- Rana Dajani, Expert on Genetics of Populations, Jordan

All over the media we read about the challenges of women and how to overcome them. The rhetoric is always the same yet nothing happens.

I propose approaching the matter in a new way...

Showcasing role models from the grassroots... humans evolved to learn from each other through social interaction... this comes from seeing and accompanying role models...

When the young generation sees role models that mirror themselves they gain the confidence to make a change... to produce their own solutions because they know better their problems and how to solve them.

The challenges that face women in the Arab world are multiple. Most importantly is stereotyping by both east and west.

The west comes into our world imposing solutions that they have developed for their women empowerment challenges assuming we have the same problems. However, our challenges are different. Therefore, it is dangerous to suggest western solutions work for us. In many cases implementing these western solutions cause more harm than good. Solutions address one aspect and do not usually take a holistic approach to the problem. One needs to address all parts.

Another challenge is representation of women in decision making and the public arena. I am not talking about lack of women. What I mean is lack of women representation from the grassroots ... The everyday women. Instead we find the elite from a small sector of society who do not represent the majority of women representing women of the region in public events. For example; recently in an international conference at the UN for civil society. Among a group of women representing different countries from the Arab world in a public platform only one woman wore a hijab and the rest did not, when over fifty percent of women in the Arab world wear a hijab.

As a result of this misrepresentation, our young generation grows up with lack of confidence in themselves both male and female. Because they don't see themselves in a position of power and empowerment. They see others who dress and talk like the west even if they are Arabs.

Therefore we need to promote role models for young people to see and look up to. For young females this is important to give them courage and for them to believe that nothing is impossible. For young males to grow up and be used to seeing women assuming different and new roles. So that they grow up to support their wives, daughters, sisters etc. These role models have to be from the community and from all sectors and backgrounds.

Another important point is mentoring. We need to mentor each other, advise each other so that we can overcome the challenges, discuss in an open and free environment what to do and how to do things. Mentoring results in networks among individuals that leads to empowerment. In Jordan we started a mentoring network for female scientists that resulted in a tool kit for anyone to adopt and implement to benefit all. The objective of mentoring is to learn and develop expertise as well as provide support for each other on multiple levels. The model proposed has been implemented in Jordan in the context of the Arab world. Three Circles of Alemat was formed in response to the low representation of women in academia and the challenges they face. The objective of the Mentoring Toolkit for mentors and mentees is to assist in creating circles of mentoring and social networks that promote their professional life and boost their personal well-being. The toolkit provides guidelines that are general enough to support a grass root approach for unique solutions accommodating local context through holistic mentoring. This toolkit is geared towards organizations, institutions and group entities.

We have also initiated a girl empowerment program where girls in teams identify the challenges they face, come up with solutions, then they apply for a grant to implement the solution over a period

of one month. The objective is not succeeding in implementing the solution and solving the challenge. The main objectives are the lessons learned along the journey of implementation that result in female empowerment at the personal level and through self discovery in a team.

The role that regional frameworks and the UfM can play in strengthening the role of women in societies is by raising awareness to the importance of females everywhere and how that impacts the economy, products marketing, research and health.

Most importantly, listening to women, giving them the freedom to do what they think is best for themselves whatever that decision may be. And support them in their decisions. That is true freedom.



Rana Dajani Ph.D in molecular cell biology, a Harvard Radcliff fellow, a Fulbrighter, Eisenhower fellow, Associate Professor and former center of studies director.

She is a world expert on genetics of populations in Jordan where she established stem cell research ethics law. She is also an advocate for biological evolution and Islam, speaker at McGill University and MIT. She established a women mentor network, she is the recipient of several awards including PEER award 2014, was named most influential women scientists in Islamic World and 12th most influential Arab women in 2015.

She was a speaker at TEDx Deadsea, the World Islamic Economic Forum 2012 and World Science Forum 2015. She developed a community-based model "We love reading" to encourage children to read for pleasure which received Synergos Arab world social innovators award in 2009, WISE Award 2014, King Hussein Medal of Honor and the UNESCO International Literacy Prize 2017.

Gender justice in the Euro-Mediterranean area: Strengthening the role of women in society by engaging men and boys

- Krizia Nardini, MenEngage Europe

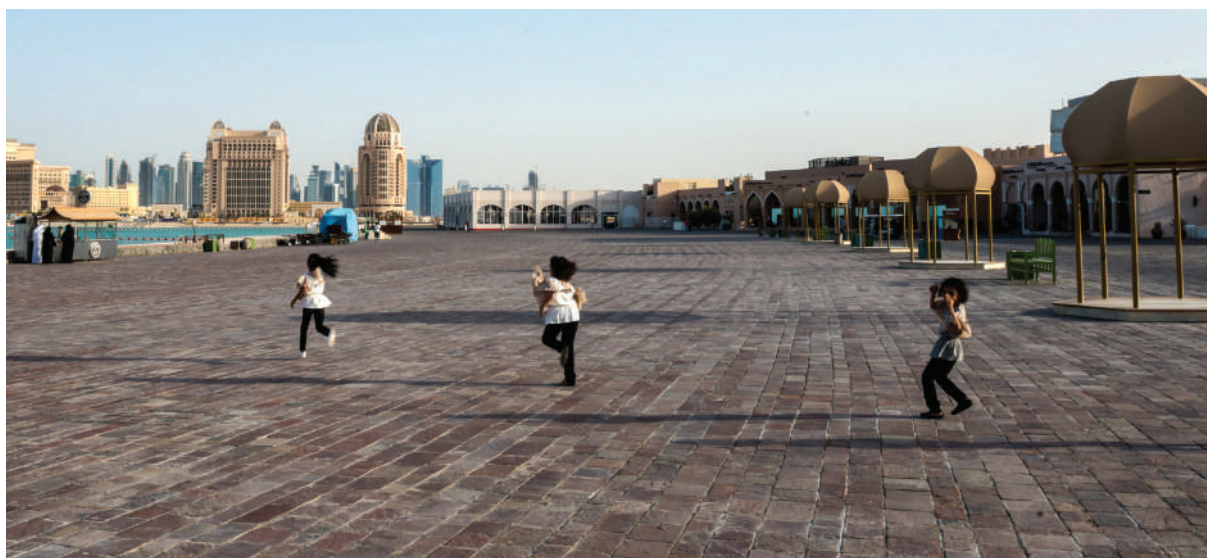
Gender justice is one of the pillars of the work of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and therefore women's empowerment one of its core goals. Unequal distributions of power and resources do affect our sense of (well)being and our possibilities of actions in the world in relation to others. Thinking about this in relation to gender justice means examining the current challenges and uneasy pathways women and girls are facing on the way to gender equity and empowerment. As well described by transnational analyses, obstacles on the way to gender justice can be related to cultural norms and expectations, economic situations, interpersonal relation of power, unequal division of labor: obstacles are contextual and as well are the product of interaction between local and global geopolitical dynamics. Despite the difference each context might encounter, this problem is common to the whole Euro-Mediterranean region.

The 43 member countries of UfM agreed upon a common framework of action during the Istanbul Ministerial Conferences in 2006, in Marrakech in 2009 and in Paris in 2013. On occasion of the UfM Conference in 2015 in Barcelona, the focus has been on Fostering Women's Participation in Economic Life and on its obstacles: women's low presence in paid labor, with only 25% in North Africa and the

Middle East, and 50% in countries of the North of the Mediterranean; low wages - with lower wages of 10-40% - and a low level of access to positions of responsibility and decision-making. Importantly, if women's economic independence means equal and fair women's participation to economic life, the latter is necessarily and intimately connected with tackling fundamental issues such as the current unequal share of care, domestic and reproductive unpaid labor performed by women in our societies. **Next to this unbalanced gendered division of care labor, major issues to work on for gender justice are discrimination, violence and legal inequalities** affecting women in the euro-Mediterranean region. Problematically, main issue faced by women and girls of the region is gender-based violence, including virtual forms of discrimination and harassment.

In order to promote gender justice in the region it is necessary to work on the socio-cultural norms that legitimize unfair ways of thinking, unequal share of unpaid and care work, and violent misogynist practices.

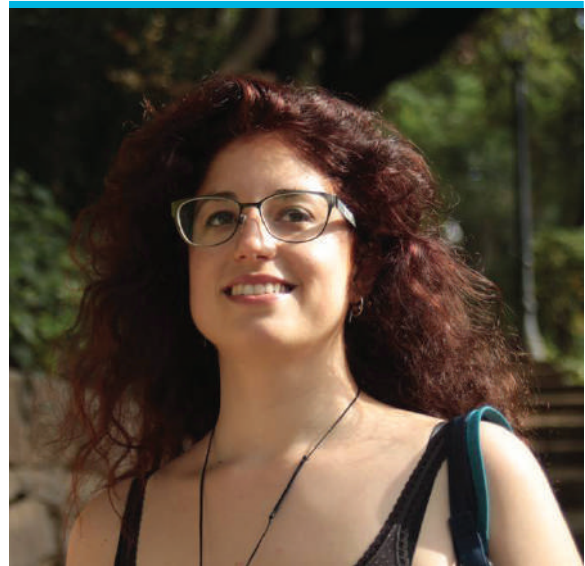
Considering the roles of boys and men in relation to gender justice is of pivotal importance so to understand more adequately how men's practices



contribute to current inequalities, and thus to identify men's responsibilities in favor of positive changes. When men are part of the problem, they are also part of the solution, as MenEngage Alliance argues when addressing boys and men as agents of change towards gender justice. The personal engagement of boys and men is crucial to responding to the challenges of the region: to promote the equal sharing of care and unpaid labor, vital to the functioning of the economic life of society; to support the education of girls and boys beyond stereotypes; to increase health for women and men; to disseminate gender-awareness among the population; to address men's role and responsibility in fighting discrimination, preventing violence and combating human trafficking.

Involving boys and men in community initiatives that foster caring masculinities

can help shifting those norms that are harmful not only to women but to men as well. As the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) on men in the MENA region shows, the social pressure to perform according to hegemonic masculinity norms is at the base of men's limited emotional expression and resistance to challenging patriarchal roles. On the other hand, at least one quarter of men in the survey responded positively to more open and equitable views. MenEngage and Promundo agree that the involvement of men in caring roles and responsible fatherhood is key in the Euro-Mediterranean region, contributing to challenging restricting social norms for both women and men, helping disengaging masculinity from circles of violence especially in areas of conflict, promoting women's agency and subjectivities. Significantly, a global justice awareness is necessary to understand how local inequalities affect the ways in which gender inequalities are reproduced, reinforced or challenged in each context.



Krizia Nardini is a researcher and a PhD Candidate in Anthropology and Gender at the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC, Barcelona) and she is member of AtGender: European Network for Gender Research and Documentation. Trained in Philosophy (University of Siena) and in Gender Studies and Feminist Theory (MPhil, Utrecht University), with a qualitative ethnographic approach Krizia's current PhD work addresses the ways in which men's practices can be reconfigured through the involvement of men into gender justice mobilization. Committed to working through academic-activist engagements, Krizia acts as researcher and advisor for MenEngageEurope, serves locally as educator and gender justice advocate, and in 2015 she started with Begonya Enguix and Paco Abril (UOC, Barcelona) the project Men in Movement that will organize in November 2017 the international workshop: Men in Movement, III: Decolonizing Masculinities:(Re) configuring Bodies, Affects and Politics. Krizia recently co-edited with Stefano Ciccone the special issue on masculinities for AG About Gender - International Journal of Gender Studies.

Success Story

- Lina Khalifeh, Beneficiary of the UfM labelled project WOMED



Lina Khalifeh is 33 years old a passionate entrepreneur who has a background in Taekwondo, Boxing and Kung fu. She has founded SheFighter the 1st Self-Defense academy for women in Jordan and the Middle East in 2012 to empower women physically and physiologically through Self-Defense training.

She has trained more than 15 thousands women and has won the Gold Award at the United Nations in 2014.

She has been mentioned and recognized by president Barack Obama during his speech at the White house in 2015 She has won Female Entrepreneur of the year in 2016 in Dubai

Now Khalifeh is expanding SheFighter to reach different countries

SheFighter is the 1st Self-Defense Studio for women in Jordan and the Middle East, designed to empower women both physically and physiologically through Self-Defense Training.

Learning SheFighter's Self-Defense techniques will not only give women the opportunity to defend themselves in difficult situations, but will also build up their self-esteem.

We strongly believe that efforts to treat violence against women must take protective approaches into consideration.

Since the opening and launching of SheFighter studio in 2012, people believed that it will be a waste of time and this kind of business doesn't really work in the Arab region. But since I believed in the importance of empowering women I believed it will be a huge success in the future and all I needed to do is just to start.

Challenges

Since I had a great belief in women causes I started with a great passion to end violence against women through self-defense. As a woman in social business I have faced many challenges throughout the 5 years. One of them getting all the legal procedures done without sending a man to the government departments, they don't expect women to run a business so I had to fight to get my papers and my legal procedures done. Unfortunately until now it is very complicated to get all the legal procedures done correctly and you have to suffer for days, sometimes months to get things done.

We also get sue cases related to women, for example, a man whose wife was a trainee at shefighter for about 1 year has put charges against SheFighter because he believed we are teaching his wife how to beat up men so he was a lawyer and he tried to shut down the business. We had to hire a lawyer to solve this problem. It took us months to solve it. Another example is women themselves as they don't have faith in women with business.

Success Stories

A trainee at SheFighter, her name is Lubna got attacked in the elevator trying to rape her in her building by a stranger. She was trained at SheFighter for 3 months so she panicked at the beginning as she froze and couldn't breathe, but because she was well trained she started defending herself, throwing punches on his face and pushing him away. He was afraid to get caught so he escaped the building. She got angry and chased him through the street as she asked people for some help and managed to catch him then the police came and she put charges against him in court for sexual assault. So she won the case and he's jailed for 3 years.

Achievements

Other than the challenges we face in the Arab region we have many great achievements globally, we have been recognized by the former United States president Barack Obama in his speech at

the white house 2015. One of them as well was winning the first place at the Women in Business Global Award that was held at the United Nations in Geneva. Another award we received was Female Entrepreneur of the Year 2016. We believe that the government has to support and empower women educationally and socially to lift up the economy of the country, we also need to highlight women's achievements in the Arab Region. Women need to raise their voices

Vision and Mission

Empowering and training millions of women globally and spreading SheFighter in every city and country by increasing awareness of violence against women and help them to stand up and raise their voices.



Lina Khalifeh in her Self-Defense academy







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