

Final Report

HIGH LEVEL CONFERENCE **WOMEN FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN 2022**



Union for the Mediterranean
Union pour la Méditerranée
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MADRID, SPAIN
26 - 27 OCTOBER 2022
#Women4Mediterranean

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MADRID, SPAIN **26 - 27 OCTOBER 2022**
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Foreword

On the occasion of the **5th Ministerial Conference on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society**, which took place in the morning of 26 October 2022 in Madrid, Ministers responsible for gender equality from the 42 member states of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) endorsed a Ministerial Declaration to accelerate the strengthening of women's role in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

Ministers agreed to enhance legal frameworks, improve women's access to leadership in public life and decision-making, raise women's participation in economic life and combat and prevent violence against women and girls.

They also agreed that, in light of the various crises, including those relating to health, climate change, and more recently emerging needs (food, water and energy security), special efforts are needed to strengthen women's economic and political empowerment and to end violence against women and girls in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

The UfM **High-Level Conference on Women for the Mediterranean**, held bi-annually, followed the Ministerial Meeting, took off in the afternoon of 26 October and ended on the 27 October. It gathered over 100 high-level representatives and international experts to discuss operational ways to implement the mandates emerging from the Ministerial Declaration, in the face of the current sanitary, food and energy crises.

This High Level Conference provided an opportunity for a further exchange of experiences,

best practices, and lessons gained on women's empowerment and rights. The outcome of these exchanges will contribute to shape the roadmap for the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration as well as the regional agenda for the years to come, notably in the direction of an inclusive and effective gender equality policy, built on a gender transformative strategy and the mobilization of public and commercial players in the area.

With respect to the structure of the High-Level Conference, the event consisted of a first session dealing with Women Economic Empowerment in the Regional Crisis context. A first panel addressed an Inclusive Labour market for a sustainable and integrated economic system, a second panel dealt with the enabling of conditions for a successful female entrepreneurship, while a third and last part covered the topic of women in leadership and decision-making in public and private sector.

The first session was followed by the one on the Gender-just response to the climate crisis. This session consisted of a first panel dealing with Gender Equality and Climate Change: women as agents for change and stakeholders instead of vulnerable groups. A second panel discussed Gender-responsive finance at scale for climate and environment action.

The third session addressed the issue of violence against women and girls in two different panels, one targeting the multidimensional impacts of crises leading to an increase of violence against women and how to prevent it, while the second panel focused on the strength-



John Paul Grech,
Deputy Secretary
General of the UfM in
charge of Social and
Civil Affairs



The economic and social consequences of the pandemic and geopolitical conflicts have hindered progress and worsened outcomes for women and girls around the world.

— **John Paul Grech**, Deputy Secretary General of the UfM in charge of Social and Civil Affairs

ening of collaboration between public/legal systems and the CSOs to reinforce legal, economic and social protection and support for victims of domestic violence and ensure adequate financial and other forms of support for prevention and combatting VAWG.

Finally, the last session targeted media and gender equality, taking into account that the media still struggles to adopt a global strategy, able to ensure a non-stereotyped and non-discriminatory representation of women, by adopting gender-sensitive lenses.

These issues are particularly timely and necessary today, since progress towards gender equality has been hindered in 2022 due to multi-layered and compounding crises, including, inter alia, the Covid-19 pandemic, the worsening of the global climate emergency, and widespread conflicts and the consequent displacements.

Indeed, the economic and social consequences of the pandemic and geopolitical conflicts have hindered progress and worsened outcomes for women and girls around the world.

Moreover, gender-equality and the empowerment of women and girls remain essential for a sustainable natural resource's management, for mitigating and adapting to climate change, for protecting ecosystems, for building resilient futures for indigenous and rural women, and for conserving biodiversity.

In dealing with Violence Against Women and Girls, it has been sadly proven that this phe-

nomenon has increased in the context of the Covid-19 crisis as well as in the context of political and armed conflicts. It is necessary to share good practices to reinforce legal, economic, and social protection and support for victims of domestic violence.

The perpetration of gender stereotypes and the under and misrepresentation of women in media contents, has been consistently demonstrated by research studies. The Global Media Monitoring Project, published in 2020, shows that women represent just 24% of news' subjects and sources. It also shows that less than 1% of the stories analyzed challenge gender stereotypes or mention gender inequalities.

Considering the strong negative impacts that all the current crises have on women, the High-Level Conference on Women for the Mediterranean represented a necessary forum of discussion to exchange views on concrete solutions and actions to strengthen the role of women in the Euro-Mediterranean society, with particular attention to the current context of multiple crises.

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From left to right: Nasser Kamel, Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean; Irene Montero, Minister of Equality, Kingdom of Spain; Helena Dalli, European Commissioner for Gender Equality; Areej Hawamdeh, Jordan Ambassador to Spain.



Madrid, 26 October Official opening

H.E Ms Irene Montero, Minister of Equality, Kingdom of Spain welcomed participants and reflected on the 25 years since the launch of the Barcelona Process. She considers the Union for the Mediterranean as living proof of a strategy leading towards a more just world. She emphasized that for Spain, feminist policies and women's rights constitute a fundamental pillar of democracy, whilst increasing efforts towards the elimination of violence against women and girls as well as budgeting investment, lead to guaranteeing the rights of women in line with the Istanbul Convention. She reminded that Spain will hold the EU Presidency in the latter half of 2023 and will place feminist policies at the center of its priorities, thereby ensuring that more feminist and democratic rights for all women and girls are guaranteed.

“ Minister Montero stated that the Ministerial Declaration is an incredibly valid political document in the sense that it identifies current problems, while setting the tone for the forthcoming challenges facing the promotion of the rights of women and girls in society. Minister Montero underscored that without women, there is no democracy. She stressed that all women need to be able to exercise social, cultural and economic rights and doing so is the only way whereby we can advocate for democracy and mean it.

H.E Ms Helena Dalli, European Commissioner for Gender Equality, expressed her full support for the Ministerial Declaration, considering it as an important step in laying the foundation for our future cooperation in the Euro-Med region. She outlined the EU's efforts in the gender equality strategy, in particular the EC proposed EU Pay Transparency Directive, which demonstrates the EU's full commitment towards eliminating discrimination, not only in words but also in law. She also mentioned that there exists agreement on

legislation meant to improve gender balance on corporate boards within the EU, which will be instrumental in breaking the 'glass ceiling'.

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic which showed how under-valued the care sector is and how informal care responsibilities are restricting women's employment, Commissioner Dalli referred to the European Care Strategy presented by the EC in September 2022, intended to ensure that everyone has a choice when combining private and professional life. Commissioner Dalli also highlighted the EU Work-Life Balance Directive, which promotes women's economic empowerment.

With respect to preventing violence against women and girls, Commissioner Dalli stated that the EC has proposed legislation, whereby, for the first time, rape would be criminalized based on the notion of a lack of consent, which is currently not being upheld in all EU MS. Furthermore, female genital mutilation as well as cyber violence would also be criminalized. She added that the Commission is also preparing a recommendation on preventing and combatting harmful practices against women and girls including forced abortion, forced sterilization, child and forced marriage and honour-related violence.

“ To achieve gender equality, we need a gender mainstreaming approach across all areas: political will and concrete action. Today's meeting puts gender equality high on the political agenda. Let's work together towards a world of equality.

Ambassador Areej Hawamdeh, Jordan Ambassador to Spain, stressed that recommendations to support and endorse women in the face of crises, such as conflicts or climate change, require joint regional work, based on different initiatives, such as the Euro Mediterranean Declarations that aspire to improve the lives of women within the region. Specifically,



Irene Montero, Minister of Equality, Kingdom of Spain



Helena Dalli, European Commissioner for Gender Equality



Areej Hawamdeh, Jordan Ambassador to Spain



There exists an urgency to leave no one behind. We can work together for more inclusive societies and ensure that the role of women in the Euro Med societies develop consistently together and stronger.

— Nasser Kamel, Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean



Nasser Kamel, Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean

she outlined the need to defend achievements on gender-related issues as well as support women and girls in enjoying access to equal opportunities; take measures to end gender-based violence; facilitate access to opportunities for rural women facing crisis situations; support the participation of women in the public and private sectors; apply integration programmes within the employment market and implement minimum quotas for women, especially with respect to high-level positions; guarantee green areas for everyone; empower women's capabilities to safely protect the environment; enable women to actively participate in food security.

H.E Mr Nasser Kamel, Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean welcomed the opportunity provided by the event for multiple stakeholders in the field to come together to strengthen women's empowerment and women's rights across the Mediterranean region.

He argued that progress towards gender parity has been slowing in 2022 due to multi-layered and compounding crises including the Covid-19 pandemic, climate emergency as well as widespread conflicts and displacements taking place in the Mediterranean region and in Europe. Millions of women and girls are being denied access to opportunities, while this disruption in the progress towards parity is seriously detrimental for the future of our cultures, economies and communities. He stressed that accelerating parity ought to be a top priority for both the public and the private sector. In this context, the UfM Secretary General Kamel emphasized the importance of the newly adopted UfM Ministerial Declaration on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society and invited participants to contribute to its eventual Roadmap.

H.E. Ms Svenja Schulze, Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany, in her video message, referred

to her Ministry's pursuit of a feminist development policy with clear binding targets, specifically to increase the share of bilateral funding that contributes to gender equality to over 90%, by 2025. She also referred to the 'Team Europe Initiative' which was launched to promote decent jobs for women and young people, through trade and investment. Together with the European Commission, Italy, France and Spain, Federal Minister Schulze confirmed that her Ministry will be investing €2.8 billion in the Middle East and North African region.

“ Gender equality can only be achieved if power imbalances and discriminatory social norms are changed. That requires us all to take joint action and I am pleased that by adopting today's Ministerial Declaration, we have laid down ambitious goals especially on ending gender-based violence but also with regard to women's economic and political empowerment.

Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General, World Health Organization (WHO), in his video message, referred to the Covid-19 pandemic, recent conflicts and climate-induced emergencies, which, in his view, have collectively worsened gender inequalities and increased the risk of gender-based violence for women and girls. He further stated that, globally, almost one in three women and girls over 15, have suffered either physical or sexual violence at least once in their life. He confirmed that the WHO is working with UfM Member States to promote gender equity, prevent and respond to violence against women – especially during emergencies – and strengthen access to services for sexual and reproductive health.

“ Addressing the needs of the most vulnerable communities is essential if we are to pick up the pace towards the SDGs.



Round-table 1: Women Economic Empowerment

Key issues discussed



H.E Maya Morsi, Head of the Egyptian National Council for Women recommended identifying those sectors, e.g. private sector social care, health, clothing, education, industry, retail, trade, services, IT among others, where research shows that increasing the participation of women would have a multiplier effect in other sectors.

She reported that Egypt has taken several steps to improve the economic empowerment of women including, for instance, changing investment laws and recognizing women as the main breadwinner equivalent to men; improving civil laws on maternity; ratifying social security and pension law. She confirmed that the Egyptian government has lifted restrictions on women's ability to work at night and has also issued a code of conduct to protect women from violence in work environments and on public transport.

H.E Morsi pointed to ideology as the main challenge to women's economic empowerment and envisioned a future where work and family are seen as both important for women.

“ If there is a high cost of childcare and housework that is only carried by the woman, entrance into the

job market is challenging, the exit is expensive and re-entry is impossible. We should focus on policies that make sure when women entre the job market, they stay there when they get married and have families.

Ms Natalia Efremova, Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Policy, Bulgaria, provided highlights of Bulgaria's national strategy 2021-30 for the promotion of equality between men and women. Some of its priority areas are related to the economic empowerment of women. These include increasing women's participation in the labour market as well as an equal degree of economic independence through, for instance, flexible working and childcare services; the elimination of the gender pay gap; an increase in participation in decision-making and overcoming gender stereotypes through education.

“ The proportion of female ministers increased from 32% in 2010 to 41% today. Female MPs increased from 22% in 2010 to 27% today. But the best results are reflected in women's participation in economic decision-making, for example, the share of women in the Central Bank Board



Maya Morsi, Head of the Egyptian National Council for Women



Natalia Efremova, Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Policy, Bulgaria



Jordi Curell, Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL)



Fatou Haidara, Managing Director, Directorate of Global Partnerships and External Relations, UNIDO

of Governors is four times higher than in 2010 from 14% to 57%, today.

Dr Jordi Curell, Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DGEMPL) noted that the conclusions adopted at the fifth UfM Ministerial on Employment and Labour, held in Marrakech in May 2022, resonated with those adopted by the current Ministerial Declaration. However, he stressed that now is time to move to a higher gear and start implementing these policies, concluding that a law which provides full equality may not be enough because, structurally, it may still not be applied.

“ When we look at the situation of women in the labour market, behind the figures are individuals who are at risk and suffering. If only for that, we should act. Economically, we then also must bear in mind the negative impact of the lack of women in the labour market.

Mrs. Fatou Haidara, Managing Director, Directorate of Global Partnerships and External Relations, UNIDO, provided examples of UNIDO's support to the Ministerial Declaration's commitments. The regional pro-

ject on promoting women's empowerment for inclusive and sustainable industrial development in the MENA region, financed by Italy and Monaco, has aimed to strengthen women's employment and entrepreneurship. It contains two complementary pillars: 1) finance and access to market 2) quality and quantity production. These are developed around a value-chain approach, identifying the highest potential ones for women's employment. She also spoke highly of 'Level Up', a project currently taking place on a national level in Jordan.

“ Women's empowerment requires a multi-stakeholder approach and cross-sector approach...We are creating opportunities for regional networking among women. One of the outcomes of this is the joint UNIDO-UfM Women Business Club launched in February.

Round-table 2: Women in Leadership

Key issues discussed

Ms Claudine Aoun, President of National Commission for Lebanese Women shed light on the situation in Lebanon, whereby only 24% of women are actively participating in the economic market, compared to 76% of men. Despite all this, she expressed the country's ambition to do more and better. In this regard, she stressed that the country should come forward with an amendment in the electoral legislation introducing political party quotas, taking into account female representatives. Lebanon is also promoting work-life balance laws with the intention to modernize educational curricula so that boys and girls can have knowledge and awareness of equality from a young age.

“We believe in equality and we believe we can make this project come true. Lebanon is actively involved in the struggle and is not willing to give it up.”

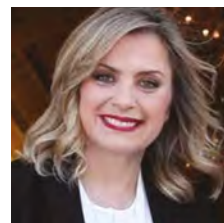
Amb. María Jesús Conde Zabala, Special Envoy on Foreign Feminist Policy, Spain presented the Foreign Feminist Policy launched in 2021. As a result of this policy, equality between men and women intersects through all of the Spanish government's decisions and actions, be they bi-lateral, multi-lateral, regional and inter-regional. This policy has identified five priorities: women, peace, safety, the protection of the rights of women; the fight against gender-based violence; economic empowerment of women and women's participation in all decision-making processes. Out of the €150 million that has been invested in cooperation, 47% supports initiatives promoting women leadership in decision-making. Prior to the policy's introduction, only 27% of women took part in Spain's diplomatic activities and only 14% of Spain's heads of mission/ambassadors, were women. This has now increased to 25%.

“The role that Spain plays is fundamental... Having a Foreign Feminist

Policy is ambitious and takes time. We need to stay alert and need collaboration from everyone.

Ms Birgit Loeser, Co-Chair of the UfM Senior Officials Meeting - EU External Action Service (EEAS) highlighted some of the EU's efforts towards promoting women in leadership in the region and globally. The Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy reaffirms the need to promote roles for women in peace, security and leadership positions. There is an EU agenda action plan that calls for women's participation in peace processes, in social and economic sectors and decision-making processes in political and public life. Most recently in 2021, a joint communication was launched by the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, on a **Renewed Partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood – A New Agenda for the Mediterranean**, which has put the promotion of women's leadership at the centre.

“Why does' women's leadership matter? First, when you find women in leadership, it means society has achieved equality, that women have had the necessary education and were given a fair chance to arrive at the top. Second, processes and policies led by those women will get a chance to develop with a women's rights lens thus completing the work of equality and fairness. Third, there is greater chance for a trickle-down effect on women who aspire to become leaders. Finally, women in leadership help to defy existing stereotypes.”



Claudine Aoun, President of National Commission for Lebanese Women



María Jesús Conde Zabala, Special Envoy on Foreign Feminist Policy, Spain



Birgit Loeser, Co-Chair of the UfM Senior Officials Meeting - EU External Action Service (EEAS)





Round-table 3: Gender Equality and Climate Change

Key issues discussed

Mr Placido Plaza, Secretary General, CIHEAM, explained that women in rural areas suffer more from the consequences of climate change, given that they only have basic access to services, lower levels of education compared to urban women, are not well informed about their rights and are underrepresented in institutions managing territorial development. He added that rural women work in sectors that are heavily dependent on climate, but do so informally, with little protection, thereby remaining more at the risk of poverty.

“We need to incorporate the territorial approach and strengthen collaboration with multiple stakeholders in rural areas, including the private sector but those than make other types of contribution in terms of expertise so that agriculture systems in the Med are adapted, sustainable and can provide solutions.”

Carlos Conde, Head of Middle East & Africa Division, OECD, informed participants that there is still insufficient evidence related to how gender and environmental policies are interlinked, which is hindering improvements. He stated that in the last 10 years, Overseas Development Aid (ODA) going towards gender and environment has quadrupled, from €4.4 billion in 2010 to €18.9 billion in 2019. However, both targets remain disconnected, with only 0.04% of all climate-related ODA being genderised. This is despite the fact that 80% of people displaced due to climate change are women. Mr. Conde state that there is still a lot to do to mainstream gender considerations into

financing climate-related action. He stressed that conditions must necessarily improve in order to fully engage the private sector as a partner in financing policies. He highlighted the green economy as a future avenue of opportunity for women in the MENA region.

“There is a unique combination of countries, donor countries and ODA recipients involved in UfM. Cooperation aid policies need to work much harder in connecting both women and environment.”

Amb. Senén Florensa Palau, Executive President, IEMed, acknowledged the fragility of the Mediterranean region from an environmental point of view and how its climate has changed considerably, leading to detrimental consequences. He remains convinced that women are part of the solution. He referred to the Euro-Mediterranean Women's Foundation, which, he stated was created to help women organisations, especially those living in rural areas, to have better tools to reach goals proposed by IEMed, for instance education, microcredit etc.

“We need to provide policy-based research of what has to be overcome now especially in relation to environmental issues and climate change...The more women participate, the better the result.”

Ms Arianna Censi, Deputy Mayor for Mobility of Milan, Member of ARLEM, briefly introduced the Euro-Mediterranean



Placido Plaza, Secretary General, CIHEAM



Carlos Conde, Head of Middle East & Africa Division, OECD



Senén Florensa Palau, Executive President, IEMed



Arianna Censi, Deputy Mayor for Mobility of Milan, Member of ARLEM



Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM), which is essentially an assembly of local and regional representatives from the EU and its Mediterranean partners, set up in 2010 by the European Committee of the Regions (CoR). She remarked that two of the three priorities of ARLEM's 2020-22 action plan, focused on women empowerment and climate change. She added that on the 12th October 2022, the CoR's role in boosting subnational climate diplomacy ahead of COP27 and COP28, was adopted, emphasizing that climate change has a distinct gender dimension. It underscores the fact that women's participation and leadership in climate negotiations is paramount for effective climate action. In addition, she stated that sub-national climate diplomacy can also help bridge this gap, adding that proportionally, more women are active in local policies than at the national level.

“We believe the gender perspective needs to be integrated into the preparation, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, regulatory measures and spending programmes of climate related policies making them valuable tools for realising gender equality. We will continue in the future because local and regional authorities play a lead role in territorial development as they are close to the citizen.”



Round-table 4: Violence Against Women and Girls

Key issues discussed



H.E Ms Aawatif Hayar, Minister of Solidarity, Social Integration and Family, Morocco, focused on the five pillars of Morocco's integrated approach aimed at tackling violence against women, as follows: 1) Prevention, namely sensitization programmes, especially those targeting early school years and families to educate children on respect and equality between girls and boys; 2) Protection, with a law adopted in 2018, ensuring that persecutors are now punished by law; 3) Care, with the establishment of 82 care centres in Morocco's 82 cities and provinces to host victims; 4) The Marrakech Declaration on Women's Rights 2020 signed by several ministries; 5) Empowerment measures aimed at getting women out of the cycle of violence.

“We see there are things to be improved. We have to work on stereotypes, which is why early education is critical. We have to face child marriage and have developed a programme with an automatic warning when girls leave school to potentially marry... This year, we succeeded in getting back 20,000 girls into school... We are also reinforcing the ecosystem through training and education. We have 1,000 social workers in the pipeline to be trained.

H.E. Ms Amal Nashwan, Minister of Women's Affairs, Palestine, provided a harrowing account of the situation of women in Palestine and referred to the murdered Palestinian Al Jazeera journalist, Shireen Abu Akleh, adding that more than 100 journalists have been murdered because women cannot speak out about what is happening in Palestine.

She explained that violence is not only domestic or gender-based but is also social and economic. In this regard, some progress has been made in Palestine. Maternity leave has been increased from 70 to 90 days; women now have the right to transfer their nationality to their children when they marry non-Palestinians and legal marriage has been increased to 18 years old. Palestine now also works with the media in order to improve reporting on these issues. Work is also being carried out with young leaders and universities with respect to the response required to address the increase in violence.

“We need to create programmes that effectively diminish gender-based violence and ensure women do not suffer from the failure of these programmes. We can't keep working only with women if we want to change and reduce violence. We need to work with men and women



Aawatif Hayar, Minister of Solidarity, Social Integration and Family, Morocco



Amal Nashwan, Minister of Women's Affairs, Palestine



Ángela Rodríguez, Secretary of State for Equality and against Gender Violence, Spain



Biljana Pejović, Head of Department for Gender Equality, Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, Montenegro

equally. We need to extend the participation to create a strong alliance.

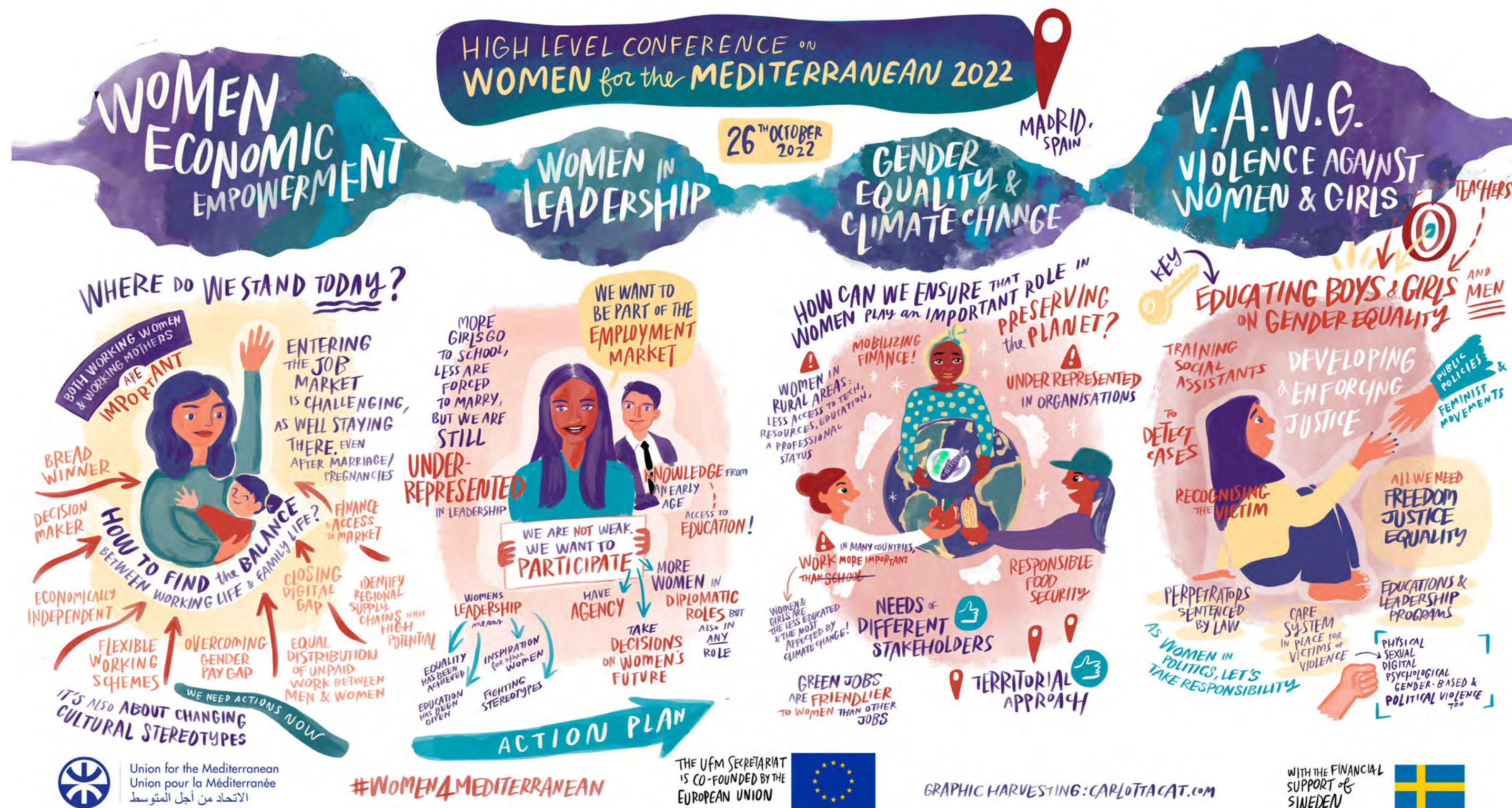
Ms Ángela Rodríguez, Secretary of State for Equality and against Gender Violence, Spain, clarified that the Spanish government's main objective in this area was, in fact, the ratification of the Istanbul Convention. In addition to developing tools to support women who suffered domestic violence, Spain intends addressing other types of violence against women and girls, for instance: trafficking, gender mutilation, forced marriage, labour market issues, harassment on streets, digital violence etc. She confirmed that Spain has successfully passed the 'only yes means yes' law in August 2022, which has fundamentally changed the penal code of Spain by removing the distinction between sexual abuse and sexual aggression (rape), making explicit that consent is the deciding factor.

“Many women are suffering because they are defending political rights of women. This is another form of violence we need to take seriously. If not dealt with, we will pay the repercussions.

Ms. Biljana Pejović, Head of Department for Gender Equality, Ministry of Human

and Minority Rights, Montenegro, informed participants that as an EU candidate country, Montenegro has achieved all goals aimed at reducing gender discrimination. Its strategic documents are harmonized with the relative existing international documents in this area. In addition, Montenegro has signed the Istanbul Convention. She further explained that one of the Government's strategic goals is the suppression of all forms of gender-based violence and improving the position and protection of the rights of the victims of violence. She confirmed that awareness among Montenegrin citizens regarding violence against women, is gradually increasing. She concluded that there is still work to be done by further improving legislation and building the capacity of professionals in the area. She further confirmed that while amendments are currently being drafted to several laws to fully align them to the Istanbul Convention, inter-institutional cooperation must be further strengthened.

“Nobody should tolerate or hide violence... victims need to feel free to ask for help that the state is obliged to provide.





Thursday 27 October

I. Women Economic Empowerment in the Regional Crisis Context

Panel 1: Inclusive labour market for a sustainable and integrated economic system

Moderator: Anna Dorangricchia, Project Manager Gender Equality, Social & Civil Affairs Division, UfM

Key issues discussed

Outi Kärkkäinen, Focal point for Gender, European Training Foundation (ETF), presented key data from a joint ETF-Eurofound study launched in 2020 in 10 ETF partner countries on women's employment and work-life balance in the Mediterranean. Worryingly, the gender gap has remained the same or increased over the last five years. Women have higher unemployment rates than men. NEET [those not in education, employment or training] rates among women are two or three times higher than among men. Although women work fewer hours, they spend considerably more time in unpaid household and care work, resulting in about 7.5 hours more work per week on average for women in the five Southern Mediterranean countries (Tunisia, Palestine, Morocco, Lebanon and Jordan) and 4.1 hours in the EU. On a positive note, the data show women tend to be more active in undertaking further training, including on-line training. The final report of the ETF-Eurofound survey will be available in December 2022.

“Upskilling and reskilling are important because skills move fast especially with digitalization and training. Women are more active in lifelong learning and taking advantage of

online training. However, in the EU, 35% indicate they don't have sufficient access to education and training whereas the figure is at 70% in the South Mediterranean countries.

Emmanuelle Roure, Team Leader for Neighbourhood, International Affairs Unit, DGEMPL referred to the monitoring exercise launched in 2021 with the UfM and the ETF, data from which was used for the Ministerial on Employment and Labour held in May 2022. On its related roadmap 2022-25 focusing on youth and women, Ms. Roure highlighted two new community of practices. The first on youth and women employment, implemented by GIZ, which works across borders and sectors and involves ministries, public and private sector employers and training institutes. The second on monitoring, with the aim to cultivate evidence-based policymaking for better policy design for youth and women.

Within the context of the 2023 European Year of Skills, a high-level conference will be organized in the Mediterranean region, to focus on skills for women and youth to reflect on how they can play an active role in driving forward economic recovery and green transition.

“The European Commission is about to launch several concrete initiatives for example, within the Team Europe Initiative, there will be a first pro-



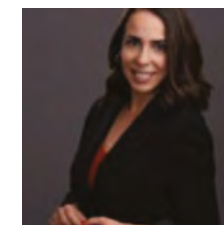
Anna Dorangricchia,
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Tair Ifergan, Director
General of Labor, Israel



**María Antonia Morillas
González,** Director of
the Spanish Institute of
Women, Spain



Patricia Sanz Cameo,
Vice-Chair for Equality,
Human Resources,
Institutional Culture, and
Digital Inclusion, ONCE
Social Group

gramme on women and economic empowerment in the Southern Neighborhood. The EC is also preparing a new regional programme focusing on youth not in employment, education or training with a strong gender focus.

Tair Ifergan, Director General of Labor, Israel, confirmed that gender inequality remains prevalent in Israel with about 31% of employed women working part-time, this being 2.5% more than the rate of men, leading to a pay gap of 32%. In addition, as a result of the pandemic, unemployment rates were significantly higher among women. It was also confirmed that while more women were laid off or put on unpaid leave, housekeeping and childcare increased among women.

Despite this, women's employment rates in the Israeli labour market stands at 76%, representing a positive post-Covid-19 recovery. This can be attributed to Israel's efforts aimed at integrating women into high-level professions and the tech industry, with extra emphasis laid on women from minority backgrounds. Ms. Ifergan cited the 'Shecodes' public-private partnership, which offers software programme courses, business networking and job placement, in over 40 branches nationwide, to Israeli women of all ages and experience.

“We are all aware of the tremendous potential in closing the pay gap. Research shows it will add €26 million euro to our annual GDP. We need to do more to promote paternity leave for men and flexible work arrangements.

María Antonia Morillas González, Director of the Spanish Institute of Women, Spain, stressed that gender gaps in the labour market require public policies that tackle the redistribution of wealth and working hours. The Spanish Institute of Women has worked on several measures, including those aimed at eliminating the vertical and horizontal segregation, to address those economic strategic areas with lower representation of women, e.g. the digital sector and STEM, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and 48 public universities.

“The right to care, placing it at the centre, launching public policies

that allow us to change regulations so this right is recognized to have co-responsibility, work-life balance and a system to allow for care of children and elderly, to ensure the work is equally distributed between men and women, is probably one of the biggest challenges ahead.

Patricia Sanz Cameo, Vice-Chair for Equality, Human Resources, Institutional Culture, and Digital Inclusion, ONCE Social Group, spoke about women with disabilities and barriers to access the labour market. She provided evidence that Spain was bucking the trend, placing an obligation on companies with at least 50 staff, to have 2% of its personnel coming from people with disabilities. Despite these efforts, Ms. Sanz Cameo admitted that societal biases do remain. For women with disabilities, experience that comes with age is still not considered as added value when compared to their male counterparts. She explained that if a woman aged 45, for instance, is unfortunate enough to develop a disability, she stops being valid. She stressed that ONCE is doing its utmost to correct the imbalances that happen in the entrepreneurial world by increasing the number of women with disabilities in paid roles.

“We believe that the labour market is the door that once open, gives opportunities to women with disabilities to live a fulfilled life because having wages, particularly for women with disabilities, shows they can have a career and they are as valid as anyone else qualified to do that job.



I. Women Economic Empowerment in the Regional Crisis Context

Panel 2: Enabling conditions for a successful female entrepreneurship



Moderator: Sana Afouaiz, Founder and CEO, Womenpreneur Initiative

Key issues discussed

Neila Amara, International Project Management Expert, UNIDO, linked women's entrepreneurship in the MENA region to social structures in the region. She argued that given that we are aware of where the problem lies, in order to address deeply rooted mindsets, what is required is to find ways to implement good practices. She informed participants that UNIDO will be launching a campaign aimed at promoting the inclusion of women in industry.

“We need to pay attention and understand that female entrepreneurship isn't a utopia to solve unemployment. We are not all born to become entrepreneurs. In the MENA region and other parts of the world, female entrepreneurship comes from a necessity. I believe that those entrepreneurs are so because they need to be, not because they want to. We need to focus our efforts on those who want to become entrepreneurs because they will become role models. Women in the MENA region need role models and people

with whom they can identify to show what's possible.

Jihen Boutiba, Secretary General, BusinessMed and Executive Director of EPSOMED, put the spotlight on the mission of BUSINESSMED, which defends the interests of 22 business confederations from the UfM countries members. She explained that EPSOMED (Enhancing Business Support Organisations and Business Networks in the Southern Neighbourhood) was a project born out of it and co-financed by the EU. EPSOMED prioritizes at least 30% women participation in all its activities. The project also targets rural areas, otherwise less digitalized, through an e-learning platform and is working on greater digital access to information for people outside capitals, towns and cities.

“We recommend using one platform e.g. UfM because we have seen a lot of platforms in every country of the region. If we have one platform, a one-stop-shop, we will discover activities and partners crossing the same issues and we can find one solution for all.

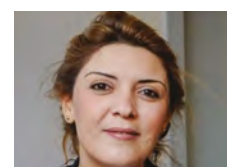
Zohra Slim, Co-founder and Chief Web Officer, InstaDeep, Start-Up provided an



Sana Afouaiz,
Founder and CEO,
Womenpreneur Initiative



Neila Amara,
International Project
Management Expert,
UNIDO



Jihen Boutiba,
Secretary General,
BusinessMed and
Executive Director of
EPSOMED



Zohra Slim, Co-founder
and Chief Web Officer,
InstaDeep, Start-Up
(Tunisia)



Anne-France Wittmann, Policy
Officer, DG NEAR

inspiring testimony proving that women entrepreneurs in the region can succeed, albeit with two caveats, these being: (i) her international exposure experience and (ii) that Tunisia is a case apart. In Tunisia, the fact that most entrepreneurs are women is not profiled enough. In Tunisia, it can be safely stated that where a company does not have a woman founder, it must have a woman co-founder in office. She confirmed that Tunisia has always pushed for equal rights, adding that a similar push was required across the MENA countries.

“The most important thing is to give women the confidence that they can do it. I mentor a lot of start-ups. I always tell them you can do this, if you put your head to. Ignore what everyone else is telling you. I came from a traditional background that wanted me to be a lawyer, engineer, doctor.

Anne-France Wittmann, Policy Officer, DG NEAR, updated participants on the European Commission's efforts, principally the finalization of a first EC regional initiative to support women economic empowerment in the Southern Neighbourhood. This has resulted from extensive consultation with stakeholders in the region and aims to tackle the main

challenge for women entrepreneurship and employment in general, specifically access to finance. The programme takes a three-pronged approach. It looks at: 1) The policy and legal environment to support reforms and new strategies for women's access to finance; 2) The development of new products and tools to support access to finance; 3) Capacity-building support and development of financial and digital skills.

“Complementarity and inclusivity are the two key tenets of this new programme. The idea is to fill in the gaps in terms of access to finance especially for women entrepreneurs. Inclusivity is at the core. We want to address the needs of several groups including the underserved in rural areas and young entrepreneurs.



I. Women Economic Empowerment in the Regional Crisis Context

Panel 3: Women in leadership and decision-making in the public and private sector

Moderator: Tala Khrais, Country Director MENA Women's Leadership Program, Forum of Federations- Jordan

Key issues discussed

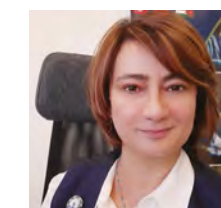
Joana Lima, President of the Women's Forum of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM), explained that the Women's Forum, which involves several Arab MPs, was founded recently in July 2022, to create a formal space to consolidate gender equality with the aim of influencing policies and decision-making, thereby contributing to full participation of women in the parliamentary sphere. She cited figures showing that certain regions are moving slower than others in this regard. For instance, according to the OECD, 43% of companies in the MENA region had a woman among their boards and 26.7% in some of these countries.

Equality and gender parity are clear aims. Women have to be included in political spheres and in public and private spheres...Today the leadership of women is a cause; in the future, it must be widespread.

Amneh I. Khasawneh, Princess Basma Center for Jordanian Women's Studies at Yarmouk University described a programme undertaken by the Center, aimed at skilling up all administrative staff at the university. She noted that there was a significant percentage of administrative staff with high-level professional experience and academic training, but were holding positions much lower than their qualifications reflected. By means of this programme, there are now more women in higher ranking positions and 23 women in leadership positions at the university.

Unfortunately, women in academia in Jordan are relegated. They don't take part in decision making process. If we foster their leadership roles, it won't be costly in terms of training, but it will be important. There is room for hope to deploy those transformation processes within the MENA region.

Annette Funk, Head of Project (WoMENA) Gender Responsive and Inclusive Politics and Economics in the MENA Region, (GIZ, Germany) presented WoMENA - a new project



Tala Khrais, Country Director MENA Women's Leadership Program, Forum of Federations- Jordan



Joana Lima, President of the Women's Forum of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM)



Amneh I. Khasawneh, Princess Basma Center for Jordanian Women's Studies at Yarmouk University



Annette Funk, Head of Project (WoMENA) Gender Responsive and Inclusive Politics and Economics in the MENA Region, (GIZ, Germany)

started in March 2021 funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented by GIZ in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Tunisia and Morocco. Ms Funk highlighted some success stories to date, including one initiative active in four of the countries which has assisted 3,500 council and active women community leaders in decision-making. In addition, 35 gender diversity projects have been implemented with large companies in Morocco, Egypt, Tunisia, Jordan. What she also considered important was the possibility to catalyze at the international level. For this purpose, mentoring relationships were established with 100 Middle Eastern and European companies.

Don't forget the reality check - who is implementing? For whom are these solutions being proposed? It's important to not only talk about women but to talk with them as it's their future we are deciding.



II. Gender-just response to the climate crisis

Panel 1: Gender Equality and Climate Change: Women as agents for change and stakeholders instead of vulnerable groups

Moderator: Africa G. Zanella, Gender Senior International Consultant, Lifewatch Eric and Centre for Sustainability and Gender Economics, (CSGE-Spain/Australia)

Key issues discussed

Yasmine Seghirate, Policy and Communication Officer, International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM), maintained the importance of including women leadership in the transition of agriculture and food industry. She stated that agri-food systems have to be more resilient to climate, whilst allowing more importance to women as agents of change with their higher presence in farms, fisheries, universities and research centres. Some of the key factors for success which she identified include information exchange and collaboration between research systems and universities, which could start a process of scientific cooperation related to the challenges in the management of natural resources and also that of incorporating a gender perspective in finding solutions.

“I believe that women are not only agents of change but active participants. We need to facilitate conditions so they can develop equality

plans and support more women who want to become scientists.

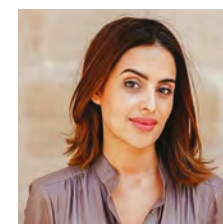
Blanca Moreno-Dodson, Director of the Center for Mediterranean Integration, UNOPS, United Nations, explained how gender is mainstreamed in all of the Center's activities, from capacity-building, to dialogues, technical reports, project incubation etc. For instance, the Center created a group of young people in the Mediterranean, 60% of whom were women, to work specifically on a water network. A competition was launched whereby they could present their business ideas. The best three initiatives were selected, each of which were offered training and seed funding.

“We need data if we want to allocate funding to women in climate change. There also needs to be monitoring of changes in regulation and legislation. A lot of the laws were articulated when there was not the magnitude of climate change we have today and without a gender lens. Without that monitoring, it will be difficult to attract and target finance.

Maggie Refaat, Regional Gender Specialist, FAO articulated the gender transform-



Africa G. Zanella,
Gender Senior
International Consultant,
Lifewatch Eric and
Centre for Sustainability
and Gender Economics,
(CSGE-Spain/Australia)



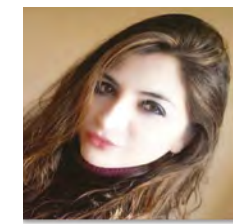
Yasmine Seghirate,
Policy and
Communication
Officer, International
Centre for Advanced
Mediterranean
Agronomic Studies
(CIHEAM)



Blanca Moreno-Dodson, Director
of the Center for
Mediterranean
Integration, UNOPS,
United Nations



Maggie Refaat,
Regional Gender
Specialist, FAO



Saira Ahmed,
Programme
Management Officer,
United Nations Office for
Disaster Risk Reduction
(DRR)

ative approaches (GTA) developed by FAO in 2019, in collaboration with sister agencies and the EU, which were addressing the underlying causes of gender inequality by embedding gender transformative approaches in policy dialogues, programmes, working modalities and institutional culture. Amongst others tools, she highlighted the Farmer Field Schools (FFS) which FAO has been implementing in the MENA region, specifically, and which is supporting innovative climate smart agricultural practices and technologies. She argued that by applying FFS and GTA, the FAO has witnessed women gain confidence which contributed to a reduction in gender-based violence.

“All of our efforts will lead to reducing inequalities in rural areas, food system transformation and enhancing women's adaptation to climate change.

Saira Ahmed, Programme Management Officer, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), focused on the UN's effort to integrate a gender perspective into all DRR policies and practices and the need to empower women to publicly lead or promote gender equality. She explained that DRR requires meaningful and diverse participation. In the region, the UNDRR has a policy moni-

toring framework which insists on having historical information of disasters and monitors countries' progress in terms of DRR. She further explained that data is segregated according to characteristics such as age, sex and disability, in order to show differences in inequalities, revealing in so doing, how different categories of people are affected differently by disasters. Finally, she informed that the UNDRR is currently supporting Arab countries in mainstreaming national DRR strategies and is also introducing climate data.

“On International Women's Day 2022, UNDRR launched a women's leadership document with examples of work from the Arab States.

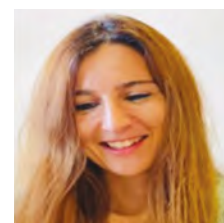


II. Gender-just response to the climate crisis

Panel 2: Gender-responsive finance scale for climate and environment action



Anna Dorangricchia,
Project Manager
Gender Equality, Social
& Civil Affairs Division,
UfM



Sarine Karajerjian,
Arab-Reform Initiative
(Lebanon)

Moderator: Anna Dorangricchia, Project Manager Gender Equality, Social and Civil Affairs Division, UfM

Key issues discussed

Sarine Karajerjian, Arab-Reform Initiative (Lebanon) provided background information on the ARI thinktank which was created in 2005 with the aim of looking at how the Arab region is actually going through multiple crises and changes. She advocated for a need to diversify voices and listen to women on the ground, something which is hard to come by within the context of climate change and its affects on women.

“We don’t have an Arab discourse on climate change. It’s always a Western discourse. We need to generate our own homegrown research for the region. We need a series of dialogues not just across the south.

Bettina Schreck, Rotational gender officer at the Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women Unit (COR/GEW), UNIDO, referred to UNIDO projects whose aim is to

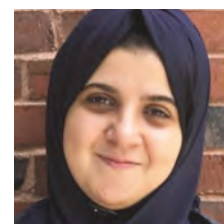
mobilize finance in the region, including the Global Cleantech Innovation Programme and the Private Financing Advisory Network. The latter is a multilateral public private partnership initiated by the Climate Technology Initiative and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. She also threw light on the fact that UNIDO is conducting training to collect gender responsive industrial data to sensitize policy makers and adopting gender responsive measures. She explained that it is common to encounter a situation whereby you have a single person interested in the issue, but it is difficult to identify a starting point, something which needs to be addressed in order for one to effectively operationalize solutions.

“Infrastructure projects are analysed on the basis of environmental and social aspects; gender should also be a common dimension. Gender infrastructure is needed in our institutions for this to happen.

Majd Mashharawi, Founder & CEO at SunBox, (Palestine) provided a detailed account of her entrepreneurial journey which saw humble beginnings via an alternative energy company in Gaza all the way to scaling up the



Bettina Schreck,
Rotational gender officer
at the Gender Equality
and Empowerment of
Women Unit (COR/
GEW), UNIDO



Majd Mashharawi,
Founder & CEO at
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Africa G. Zanella, CAGE
and CIF Observer and
Gender Focal Point
for Climate Investment
Fund (CIF)

Middle East. She recounted how this was made all the more challenging on grounds of being both a Palestinian and a woman. She encouraged organisations to offer financial support, particularly at the start-up phase of any enterprise, confessing that most women would hardly have any clue as to where and how to access finance at that critical stage, thereby end up discouraged and eventually abandoning their enterprise. Following six years in Gaza, her company ‘SunBox’ has provided electricity to more than 75,000 people, creating 65 jobs, equally divided between women and men, with projects emanating from the UN and other agencies. She informed that in 2022, the company is hiring 15 full-time staff in Palestine, 6 in Saudi Arabia, 2 in UAE, with prospects for further up-scaling.

“It took me one year and eight months to get first products inside Gaza while another company that started after, it took them a few months because it was run by men and easier for them to deal with border control and also to negotiate and sell to society. When I started the company, I was looking for a man to join because people

thought I wasn’t qualified even though I’m an engineer.

Africa G. Zanella, CAGE and CIF Observer and Gender Focal Point for Climate Investment Fund (CIF) explained how the CIF is dedicated to utilizing climate finance to recognize women’s specific needs, empowering their potential as agents of change and achieving gender parity in climate-smart development. She admitted that, as a rule, funding remains tied to what is successful rather than entrepreneurial, that a problem of bureaucracy exists everywhere, thereby invariably discouraging business development. She asserted the need to identify more clearly the NGOs and civil society working on the ground who are ensuring women get a voice and which are fighting very hard for funding in order to do so.

“What do women want? Women want voice, positions. People in power make references. We are not a homogenous group. We have been fighting to ensure we segment the various groups of women.



III. Violence Against Women and Girls

Panel 1: The multidimensional impacts of crises leading to an increase of violence against women and how to prevent it

Panel 2: Strengthening the collaboration between public/legal systems and the CSOs to reinforce legal, economic and social protection and support for victims of domestic violence and insure adequate financial and other forms of support for prevention and combatting VAWG

Moderator: Sana Afouaiz, Founder and CEO, Womenpreneur Initiative

Key issues discussed

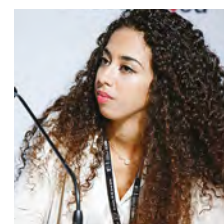
Stéfania Chiru, Deputy Head of Unit for International Affairs, Ministry of Gender Equality (France) elaborated on the French government's public consultation process on violence against women and girls, which took place between September-December 2019 and which led to the development of a number of initiatives. She explained that France adopted a national strategy to tackle violence against women and girls, containing 54 difference measures, focusing around three main areas - prevention, protection of victims, and education. Some examples of activity include the establishment of a 24/7 hotline for victims (which marked a 400% increase in use/cases of violence against women during the first two weeks of the pandemic); police officers were better equipped to identify victims; psychological support was provided to perpetrators.

“When we think of crisis, we mostly think of healthcare crises and

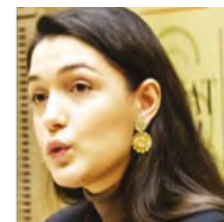
others associated as well as negative effects. It is important to understand that these crises can bring forward violence against women. This is the hidden part of the iceberg.

Gülser Ustaoğlu, General Director on the Status of Women, Ministry of Family and Social Services, Republic of Türkiye confirmed that in Turkey, violence against women and girls is resolutely combatted via the principle of ‘Zero Tolerance’, implemented via multi-dimensional efforts, projects and campaigns, focusing on awareness-raising. In 2012, Turkey’s law on the protection of the family and on the prevention of violence against women, came into effect. Subsequently, the country completed secondary legislation and continues to update it in line with emerging needs. Turkey’s National Plan for Combating Violence Against Women and Girls 2021-25, has benefited from the contribution of universities, the private sector and others and it includes five main objectives accompanied by 227 activities.

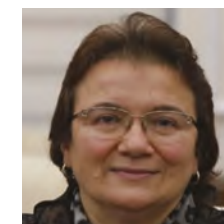
“Our work is an indicator of Turkey’s determination in the fight against



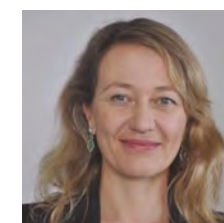
Sana Afouaiz,
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Womenpreneur Initiative



Stéfania Chiru,
Deputy Head of Unit
for International Affairs,
Ministry of Gender
Equality (France)



Gülser Ustaoğlu,
General Director on
the Status of Women,
Ministry of Family
and Social Services,
Republic of Türkiye



Victoria Rosell Aguilar,
Delegada del Gobierno
contra la Violencia de
Género, Spain



Cristina Fabre, Team
Leader, Gender-Based
Violence, European
Institute for Gender
Equality (EIGE)



Manal Benkirane,
Programme Specialist
for EVAW, UN WOMEN
Regional Office for Arab
States

violence. This will enable women to take part more actively and strongly in all aspects of life and have equal access to opportunities.

Victoria Rosell Aguilar, Delegada del Gobierno contra la Violencia de Género, Spain, outlined the main action taken in response to the Covid-19 pandemic; Spain’s La Palma volcano eruption; and the war in Ukraine. Services to support women were declared essential during the Covid-19 lockdown. The 016 hotline for victims of gender-based violence was adapted and during the first month of the pandemic, service demand increased by 59%. By email, it increased by 450%. The 2021 volcano eruption also required a gender perspective, given that people had to be evacuated, while women could not be relocated together with the perpetrators of violence. With regard to the war in Ukraine, Spain introduced institutional campaigns aimed at prevention and protection in cases of human trafficking given that a high level of risk existed for girls and boys who left the country. The 016 hotline was extended and translation into Ukrainian was provided.

“If WHO stated years ago that violence against women is a public health problem that reaches pandemic proportions, then any crisis is a crisis over another crisis faced by women.

Cristina Fabre, Team Leader, Gender-Based Violence, European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) informed participants that during the Covid-19 pandemic, EIGE researched measures taken in the EU aimed to fight gender-based violence perpetrated by intimate partners. It transpired that, during the crisis, none of the EU countries had deployed a strategy to counter violence. Furthermore, only 11 out of the 27 EUMS deployed a contingency plan or introduced guidelines to combat violence perpetrated by intimate partners during the pandemic, with Spain leading the way. EIGE learned that out of the measures introduced, only a few remained, most were reactive in nature and once the pandemic was over, many of them were deactivated. EIGE is planning to carry out a study with EU Member States on the prevalence of violence against women and girls. In 2024, it will avail of EU data on the experience of women who suffer from violence, which will highlight experiences encountered pre- during and post-crisis. It is

also creating a mapping of the women’s sexual reproduction rights and also the extent of refugees’ access to these rights.

“We need to emphasize the intersection of policies that considers the vulnerability of women and those women who suffer most - migrants, refugees, victims of sex exploitation, violence from intimate partners etc.

Manal Benkirane, Programme Specialist for EVAW, UN WOMEN Regional Office for Arab States questioned whether the UN SDG to eliminate violence by 2030 was achievable at the current pace. She stated that the current global estimates indicate that every 11 minutes a woman or girl is being killed by her family. She commended key developments in the Mediterranean in terms of legislation, strategies and services, but highlighted social norms as the main barrier to progress in the area. This was proven by a UN WOMEN study in Arab countries, which indicated a level of consensus that violence against women needs to be prioritized in national action plans. However, disagreement still exists on whether women should tolerate violence to keep the family together especially during difficult times. In this regard, 1 in 3 respondents replied in the affirmative. Another UN WOMEN study on the region indicated that half of the women in the region do not feel safe online, something which carries with it several implications.

“We need interventions that will create real behavioral changes and change social norms. Scale what works. Don’t forget the women left behind that also need to be reached by services. Women in conflict and crises need to put forward in the roadmap.

Lucie Déchifre, Programmes Manager, EuroMed Feminist Initiative (EFI), Jordan, revealed how EFI is mobilizing civil society and building dialogues with women-led organizations, decision-makers and stakeholders to raise awareness of the UfM process as well as the Ministerial Declaration just adopted with a view to support its implementation. This has been done through a gender regional platform, to gather civil society experience, which led a ‘Zero Tolerance’ campaign for women and girls launched 2019. One of its key messages aims to shift the blame from the victim to the per-

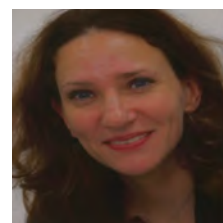


petrator. Also set up in 2019, the regional civil society observatory produces studies including, for instance, a regional index on violence against women and girls that has 49 indicators. The EFI has also developed a tool for teachers - ABC on gender sensitive education - that has now reached 6,000 pupils.

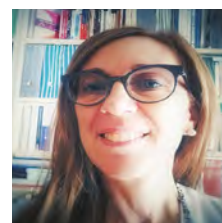
In all our work, we tried as much as possible to build on the outcomes and recommendations of each follow-up process from one ministerial meeting to the next and coordinated with the UfM Secretariat. We will continue this collaboration.

Cristiana Carletti, UfM Italian Gender Focal Point, Italy, highlighted Italy's main-stream approach which is in line with regional and international standards and policies. Italy has further adapted UfM Ministerial Declaration priorities to its own domestic framework, in particular paragraphs 73 and 74. In May 2021, it established an inter-institutional steering committee and an observatory on the phenomenon of violence against women and girls and also on domestic violence. As a follow-up on this, a Memorandum of Understanding has been approved with local authorities to define minimum standards of anti-violent centers that receive funds to carry out their work. €40 million for 2022 has been allocated to this work and a similar amount is budgeted for 2023.

We have worked a lot for the for male perpetrators of violence. They should be included in defining what are the root causes of violence and to have a positive impact.



Lucie Déchifre,
Programmes Manager,
EuroMed Feminist
Initiative (EFI), Jordan



Cristiana Carletti, UfM
Italian Gender Focal
Point, Italy





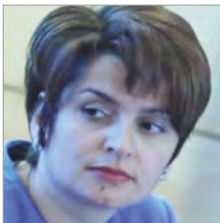
IV. Media and Gender Equality



Carolina Pecharromàn,
Editor of “Igualdad” – RTVE



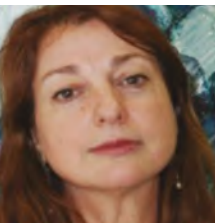
Ihssane Benbel,
Journalist/anchor of radio 2M for the weekly program “Gender and Diversity Debate” in Morocco



Valbona Sulçe,
Researcher and journalist from Tirana, Albanian Woman in Audiovisual (Albania)



Farah Ahmad, Senior Journalist Al-Ghad Daily Newspaper, Jordan (online)



Maria-Àngels Roque, Director of the Culture, Gender and Civil Society Department, Euro-Mediterranean Women’s Foundation (IEMed)

Moderator: Carolina Pecharromàn, Editor of “Igualdad” – RTVE

Key issues discussed

Ihssane Benbel, Journalist/anchor of radio 2M for the weekly program “Gender and Diversity Debate” in Morocco, explained that there are two dimensions relevant to the media landscape and women in Morocco, namely: (i) the economic and political aspect with women at the forefront and (ii) that 25% of the government is in the hands of women. However, when looking at women’s presence on TV, it is difficult to find women reporters/ experts. The reasons for this can be twofold. Either because they are invited on the pretext that they happen to be either a champion or a victim on stereotype topics or because they have been taking a lead role in some respect.

“Women are afraid of the media and the image of them that may be conveyed.

Valbona Sulçe, Researcher and journalist from Tirana, Albanian Woman in Audiovisual (Albania) reported that in Albania, women are both under-represented and misrepresented on TV stations, largely due to commercially-linked media organisations emphasizing focus on politics and with less attention is given to a wider range of topics. In addition, about 70% of reporters are women and girls, yet very few are editors-in-chief and directors. She recommended a revision of the Albanian Code of Ethics for Journalists as well as the school of journalism curricula which is outdated and does not rely on a model which deals with gender. She argued that citizens also have power to push for change, with technology providing them opportunity to tell their own story.

“If we want to change the reality of media for women and girls, we should start first to change the mindset of journalists when they are reporting on events in society... Journalists have a lot of responsibility to reflect diversity in our society.

They also have a great resource and capability to raise awareness of misogyny.

Farah Ahmad, Senior Journalist Al-Ghad Daily Newspaper, Jordan (online) presented reflections on the subject in view of the forthcoming COP27, knowing that the majority of those affected by climate change are women. She asked how the media could help such women by perhaps bringing their cases to light, both in written and audiovisual journalism and how governments should act in bringing about the necessary improvement. She indicated that sometimes it is challenging with editors-in-chief who do not see either climate change or gender both as a priority or as part of the subject matter, urging that journalists’ skills need be enhanced.

“The media continues to neglect the impact of climate change on women. We only talk about it at level of the government and policies, but we forget the people who are

facing a hard life because of these impacts. The media that are covering COP27 need to highlight the stories of women in order to change this situation.

Maria-Àngels Roque, Director of the Culture, Gender and Civil Society Department, Euro-Mediterranean Women’s Foundation (IEMed), informed that since 2013, the Foundation had reinforced effective channels of communication, conscious that it needed to work closely with journalists in all of its projects, particularly in view of the arrival of new technologies, which have proven useful for women unable to report their cases of violence.

“It is vital to change stereotypes and the media plays an important role in doing so, especially TV, because it creates role models. It is important for women and girls to see these role models.



Conference Findings & Key Recommendations

Women Economic Empowerment

For what concerns the economic and social consequences of the pandemic and geopolitical conflicts, they have paused progress and worsened outcomes for women and girls around the world. Different good practices and missing actions that should be implemented have been underlined during the High-Level Conference within the fields of women economic inclusion, female entrepreneurship, and women leadership, such as:

- Empowerment presupposes political, economic and social conditions for an enabling environment for all women and girls in life. Policies and recommendations should go in this direction.
- Family is important as much as work. We should not only value the working woman and not the mother. We must encourage mothers to continue working and raise awareness, promote legislative reform to assist women to continue living all aspects of their life to their fullest.
- Upskilling and reskilling are important because skills move fast especially with digitalization and training. Women are more active in lifelong learning and should be inserted in programmes and trainings of reskilling and upskilling.
- Flexible working arrangements incentivize the female employment. However, this flexible arrangement reinforces the traditional role of women being the child carer responsible at home. It also may hinder career development, promotion and pay.
- Monitoring and data are critical for policy makers to link indicators that are key and to guide reforms to ensure the convergence of these indicators.
- Work-life balance still needs to be effectively addressed since it's an instrument that, if efficiently implemented, can help

women and men to equally distribute the burden of the unpaid care work.

- Policies orientated towards the recognition of work given by caregivers and the right to care, guaranteeing it, taking into account co-responsibility by the state, should be fostered.
- We can't talk about the inclusive labour market if we don't take into account women with disabilities. Imbalances need to be corrected. It is also vital to make reference to women with disabilities when we talk about the digital divide and gender-based violence.
- We need to pay attention and understand that female entrepreneurship isn't a utopia; we are not all born to become entrepreneurs. In the MENA region, female entrepreneurship largely comes from a necessity. We need to focus on our efforts on those who want to become entrepreneurs because they will become role models.
- Once you get women into STEM fields, you can have more of them pushing for senior roles. Representativity matters, therefore policies to encourage the inclusion of women in this field are needed.
- With regard to the future, the legal framework, we need to set more mechanisms for companies e.g. establishing quotas. It is the only way of boosting inclusion and representativity of women in the economic market.

Gender Equality and Climate Change

Gender-equality and the empowerment of women and girls remain essential for a sustainable natural resource's management, for mitigating and adapting to climate change, for protecting ecosystems, for building resilient futures for indigenous and rural women, and for conserving biodiversity. The High-Level Conference's

exchange of views on this timely issue has shared good practices that should be considered:

- We need to identify more clearly the NGOs and civil society on the ground that are working to ensure women get a voice on their current needs.
- Every time there exists an infrastructure project, gender should be a common dimension. Gender-mainstream in these fields is needed.
- An Arab, and not just Western, discourse on climate change is needed to have full representation of all women within the Euro-Mediterranean region.
- Women networks and working groups need to be included. Networking should be there to cover all the topics, even in the climate change's issues.
- What we've learned from the pandemic is that nothing is local. The power of collective work is important. More cooperation – sharing data, knowledge, expertise. The reality on the ground is we are in crisis. It's important to work together not against each other.
- Women need to be supported throughout their business journey, not only when it becomes successful. They need to be encouraged since the beginning of their careers and their work in the fight against climate change.
- We need to know where to invest in order to apply a gender lens.
- Stakeholder approach and multifaceted approach is the foundation for action that we have to undertake and closer collaboration between the rural and urban areas is a must to be able to fight inequalities.
- We need to provide as much evidence as we can and policy-oriented research of what has to be overcome on environmental issues and climate change. The more women participate, the better the result will be.
- The gender perspective needs to be integrated into the design, implementation, monitoring and spending of climate related policies and programmes.

Violence Against Women and Girls

With reference to Violence Against Women and Girls, it has been sadly proven that VAWG increased in the context of the Covid-19 crisis as well as in the context of

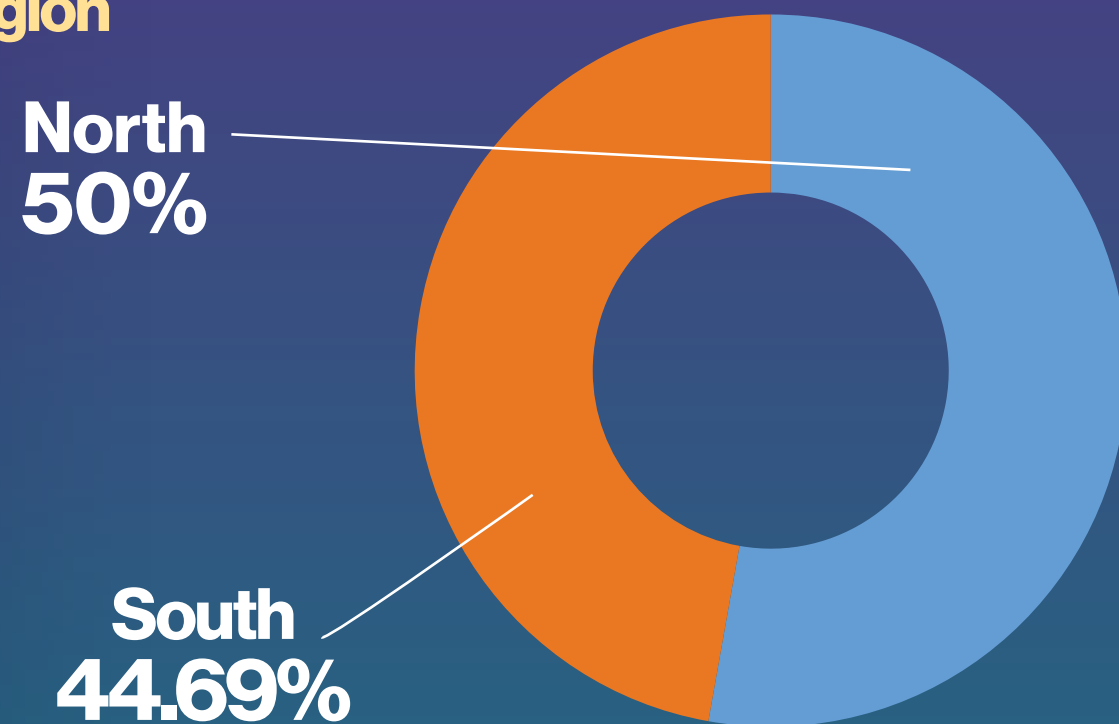
political and armed conflicts. Good practices to reinforce legal, economic, and social protection and support for victims of domestic violence and insure adequate financial and other forms of support for prevention and combatting VAWG have been identified during the High-Level Conference:

- Covid-19 and the war in Ukraine has placed everyone in a very different situation and we need to examine and gather data on what is the current situation of women.
- When we are talking about strategies, we need to guarantee funding.
- We can't keep working just with women if we want to change and reduce violence. We need to work with men and women equally. We need to extend the participation to create a strong alliance and leverage digital technology.
- More data is needed to know where support is necessary and to therefore design, develop, and implemented targeted responses.
- Measures to assist women who are victims of violence cannot just be introduced as contingencies in emergency situations but must be developed to stay.
- We need to delve into the emphasis on the intersection of policies that will take into account the vulnerability of women and those who suffer most are migrants, those in refugee camps, victims of sex exploitation, violence from intimate partners etc. We need a declaration that covers all.
- There is a disconnect between the recognition of violence and social norms of what is acceptable that still needs to be addressed to ensure that violence is not tolerated.
- We now have laws and services and also a wealth of knowledge of what works. We need solutions with clear budget lines, clear monitoring frameworks, clear financial commitment.
- In war situations, we cannot have a peace agreement that doesn't take into account the violence suffered by the women who return to their country after the conflict. Women in crises are those we need to put forward in the roadmap. Let's not leave them behind.

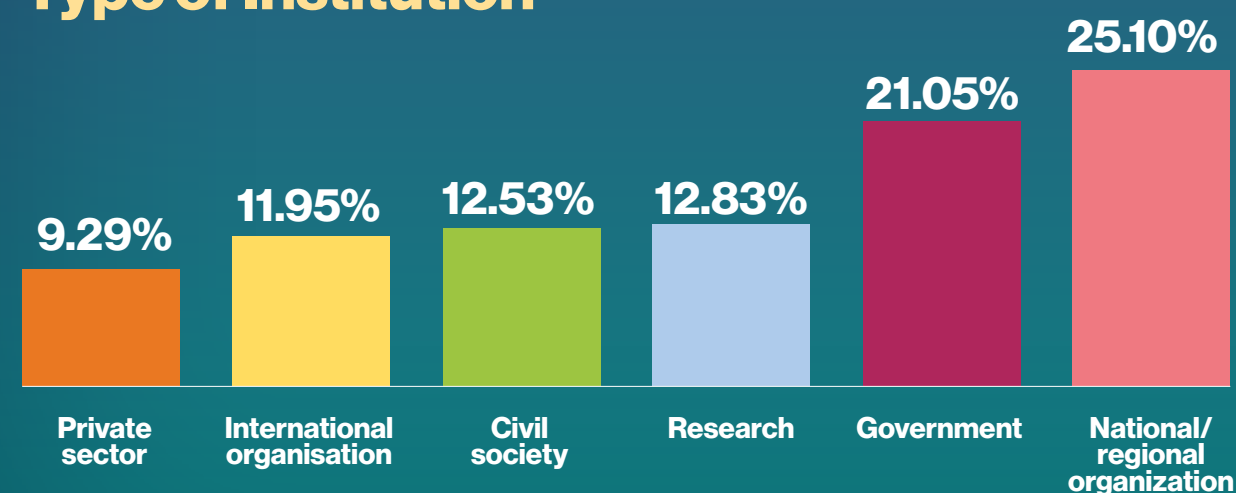


The Conference in Numbers

Region

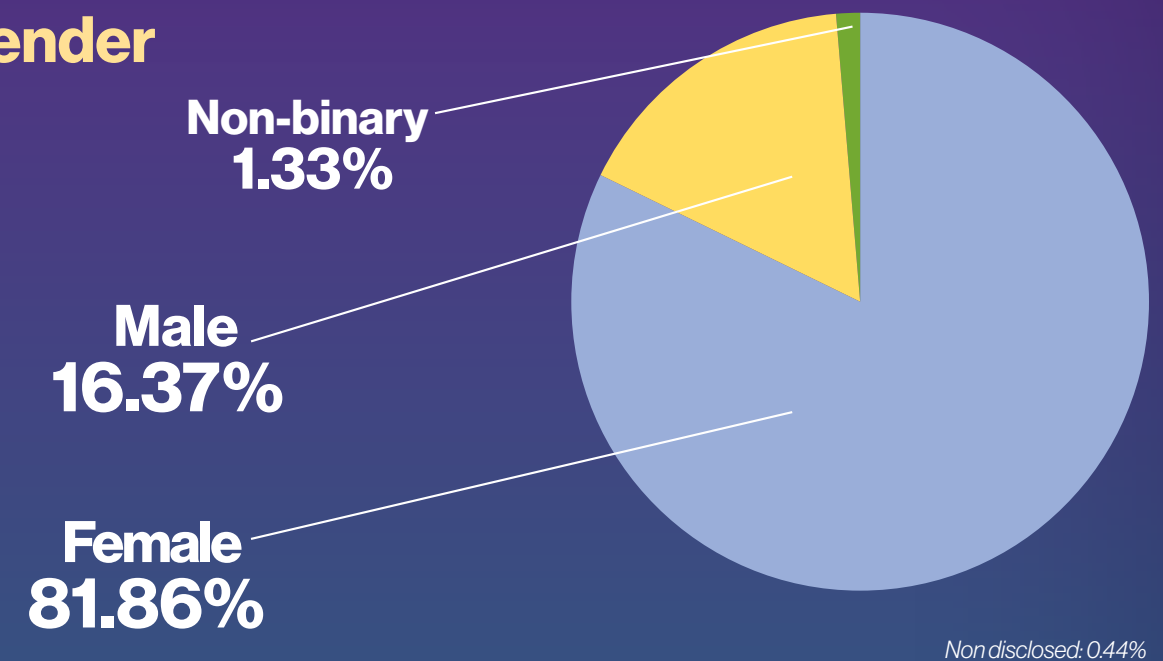


Type of Institution



Non disclosed: 7.52%

Gender



Media

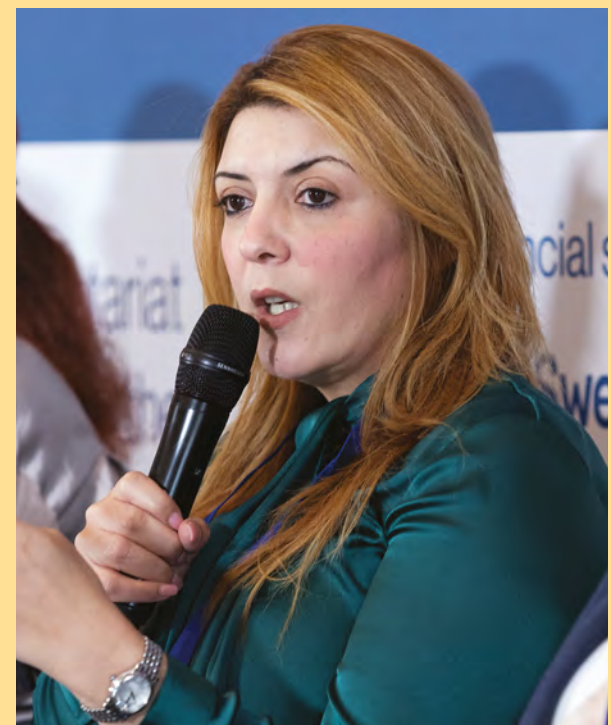


Social Media

92 publications reaching over **365K** users

across all social media platforms





Final Report

HIGH LEVEL CONFERENCE WOMEN FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN 2022

#WOMEN4MEDITERRANEAN

MADRID, SPAIN 26 - 27 OCTOBER 2022
#Women4Mediterranean



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