



## **National Dialogue "Following up on the 4th UfM Ministerial Meeting on women's rights"**

**7-8 May 2018, Jordan**

The national dialogue under the patronage of Minister of Social Development H.E. Hala Lattouf, and with the support of the European Union, took place on 7 – 8 May 2018 in Amman, Jordan. It was organized in partnership between Euromed Feminist Initiative (EFI), Arab Women Organization of Jordan (AWO) and the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD).

During the first day, around 100 representatives from CSOs and CBOs from Amman and governorates, gathered in a national forum at the Landmark hotel in Amman and opened a discussion on a civil society follow up mechanism for the implementation of the Declaration from the 4th UfM Ministerial Conference on women's rights (November 2017, Cairo). The Declaration of the Civil Society Conference that Euromed Feminist Initiative organized back to back with the Ministerial Conference was also discussed.

H.E. Ms. Hala Bseiso Latouf, Minister of Social Development, opened the national forum and expressed her appreciation of the civil society efforts in following up and spreading awareness on the Ministerial Process. She affirmed the importance of partnership between the Ministry of Social Development and civil society towards achieving positive change in the field of equality and women's rights.

Ms. Muna Rfou, Director of Gender Unit, Ministry of Social Development presented the Ministerial Declaration and underlined the role that the MoSD plays in this process, as Jordan is co-chairing the UfM together with the European Union.

Ms. Laila Nafaa, Director of Programs, Arab Women Organization (AWO) presented the civil society led dialogue process and the Civil Society Declaration that was presented to the Ministers at the Conference in Cairo.

During the following session, experts from the civil society, political parties and the Parliament discussed mechanisms for the implementation of gender equality through the Ministerial Process with focus on economic participation. Mr. Mustafa Khasawneh, Member of Parliament, highlighted the work of the Jordanian Parliament and the important role of the Parliamentary Initiative Bloc in the implementation of gender equality in Jordan. Ms. Abla Abu Elbeh, Secretary General of the Jordanian People's Democratic Party HASHD, emphasized the importance of women's involvement in workers and trade unions, and highlighted the importance of creating a friendly environment for women at work. Ms. Sahar Aloul, board member of SADAQA praised the latest decisions by the Lower House's Labour Committee to amend provisions in the draft Labour Law that ensured equal wages, the presence of day-care centers at workplaces and the introduction of paternity leave. The participants put down the civil society recommendations for follow up mechanisms and tools to support the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration.

The national dialogue on the 8<sup>th</sup> of May was hosted by the Minister of Social Development and took place at the Ministry. It gathered representatives of Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Labour,



Ministry of Youth, Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Jordanian National Commission for Women, representatives Municipalities and Local Councils as well as representatives of women's rights organizations, lawyers, academics, gender experts and journalists.

In her welcoming remarks, H.E. Ms. Hala Bseiso Latouf, underlined that the four priorities areas of the Ministerial Declaration are among the priorities of the government and are consistent with its policies and programs.

H.E. Mr. Andrea Fontana, EU Ambassador to Jordan emphasized that the EU funded projects in Jordan support the gender equality agenda of the Ministry of Social Development in cooperation with civil society and added that EU gender policy focuses on 3 priorities: ensuring women's physical and psychological integrity, promoting women's social and economic empowerment and strengthening women's voice and participation.

H.E. Mr. Erik Ulhenhag, Ambassador of Sweden to Jordan, shared analysis and lessons learned from Sweden and affirmed the importance of gender equality as a basic condition for peace, security and sustainable development.

Ms. Boriana Jonsson, Executive director of Euromed Feminist Initiative underlined the importance of sustainable cooperation between decision makers and women's rights organizations in policy making based on mutual trust and in the respect of the different roles, as this allows the civil society to provide expertise and analysis of the situation of women on the ground.

During the first session, Dr. Ahmad Abu Haidar, explained the process after the 2013 Paris Ministerial and the changed geo-political environment that framed the Ministerial Declaration from Cairo 2017 as a strong actional plan with four priority areas: raising women's participation in public life and decision-making; improving women's economic participation; combating all forms of violence against women and girls; and eliminating gender stereotypes. Ms. Laila Nafaa, Arab Women Organization stressed the milestones of dialogue process led by the civil society that developed the Gender regional Platform as a road map for equality in the Euro-Med, which strongly contributed to the Ministerial policy conclusions.

During the second session, Ms. Amal Haddadin, Legal Advisor, Jordanian National Commission for Women, Ms. Iman Akour, Ministry of Labour and Ms. Mais Afaneh, EFI Regional Manager discussed mechanisms for the implementation of gender equality through the Ministerial Process with focus on economic participation and women's access to labour market and the recommendations from the civil society forum from the previous day were presented.

After a lively open discussion, all participants agreed on the importance of developing a national action plan to operationalize the Ministerial Declaration in Jordan and to allow an implementation of concrete policy measures that match the national priorities in particular in the field of women's participation at the labour market. The MoSD in cooperation with the women's rights organizations committed to developing



a draft national plan-proposal to be presented to Minister Latouf, who will further discuss it with the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Women Empowerment that Minister is chairing.

The roundtable was marked by high-level of interventions and interaction. It was a qualitative step in on-going multi-sector dialogue to support and enhance the implementation of Ministerial Declaration as a major instrument advancing policy making in the field of gender equality.