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Press release
Building a Common Agenda for Implementing International, Regional and National Mechanisms that Promote and Protect Women's Rights and Enhance Democracy

On the 25th of November 2012, the European Feminist Initiative IFE-EFI, Sisterhood is Global Institute SIGI and Arab Women Organization AWO organized a roundtable in cooperation with the Regional Economic Empowerment of Women Project REEWP/Oxfam-Québec and Global Fund for Women in order to follow-up on the initiated national and regional dialogues within the framework of the regional project "*Promoting a common agenda for equality between women and men through Istanbul Process*" funded by the European Union and the REEWP/Oxfam-Québec project funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

The Round Table, organized in cooperation with the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, provided space to continue the launched discussions on women's rights and democracy building among different stakeholders. It also planned for the next steps in 2013, carving common strategies for strengthening of women's rights, status and participation using the international and regional instruments for gender equality.

Mr. Bassam Haddadin, Minister of Political Development and Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, Jordan, welcomed the participants and stressed that "Jordan has a significant interest in upgrading women's participation and human rights". The EU Ambassador in Jordan Ms. Joanna Wroniecka emphasized that "the European Union will continue to work together with the Government of Jordan to make gradual steps towards the full participation of women in society". Mr. Wajih Azaizeh, Minister of Social Development underlined women's active involvement in development of the society historically and stressed the need of expanding social services, especially in the poor areas, like "providing more day care for children in order to enable women's participation in the public sphere". The Secretary General of Jordanian National Commission for Women, Ms. Asma Khader underlined that the newly adopted National Strategy for Women in Jordan is an integral part of the common frame of mechanisms that promote women's rights and gender equality and support the need to "harmonise the national legislation with the international standards for women's rights."

During the round table, all the speakers addressed the importance of providing a space for a structural dialogue between the different stakeholders and strengthening the cooperation between the different spheres. Dr. Fawaz Ratrot, Director of policies and strategic management and Media Spokesperson of the Ministry of Social Development addressed the role of the Ministry of Social Development in the promotion of women's rights and raised a challenge for all: the filling of the "gap between reality and ambitions".

The Swedish Ambassador to Jordan Ms. Charlotta Sparre stressed the importance of the cooperation between governmental and non-governmental sectors in the work towards gender equality, while

Lilian Halls French, the Co-President of European Feminist Initiative demonstrated the link between the status of women in the society and the level of democracy and the importance of creating binding mechanisms for monitoring of the implementation of Istanbul-Marrakech Ministerial Conclusions and the International Conventions. The Member of Parliament Abla Abu Ilba raised the important question for all politicians and decision makers to put gender equality in the heart of their agendas, while Layla Hamarneh, the Director of Project at Arab Women's Organisation elaborated on the necessity for a stronger cooperation between the women's rights organisations and networks not only nationally but in the whole Euro-Med region towards a common goal of improving the status of gender equality and implementing the Istanbul-Marrakech Ministerial Conclusions.

The participants endorsed recommendations that will be handed to the Prime Minister and to relevant ministries, members of parliament and senators as well as to women's rights organisations in the civil society.

The cooperation between European Feminist Initiative IFE-EFI, Arab Women Organization AWO and Sisterhood is Global Institute SIGI with the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs is an innovative collaboration which stems from the shared commitment to ensuring greater impact in terms of women rights in Jordan and in the region.