



Gender Regional Platform

Ramallah, 26 April 2017

Press release

National Roundtable

From Ministerial Conclusions to Gender Equality Policy-making in Euro-Med region 26th of April 2017, Grand Park Hotel, Ramallah

The second national roundtable “From Ministerial Conclusions to gender equality policy making in the Euro-Med region”, organised by the Palestinian Working Women Society for Development (PWWSd) and the Federation of Women's Action Committees (FWAC), in partnership with Euromed Feminist Initiative, and the support of the European Union, took place on 26th of April 2017 at Grand Park Hotel, Ramallah – Occupied Palestine. This national dialogue is a part of the one and a half year-long process in the frame of the project “Gender Regional Platform” funded by the European Union, to prepare for the 4th UfM Ministerial conference on women’s rights, scheduled to take place in Egypt in the fall this year.

The event gathered over 50 representatives of women’s rights CSOs, decision-makers, legislators, diplomats, UN agencies, gender experts, academics and researchers, to discuss the policy recommendations on improving the status of gender equality in the context of occupation of Palestine. The participants also prepared concrete recommendations concerning Palestinian women to the upcoming 4th UfM Ministerial Conference in 2017.

Ms. Amal Khreishe, Euromed Feminist Initiative IFE-EFI, opened the roundtable and presented the milestones of the national and regional process of developing Gender Regional Platform with the policy recommendations to the 4th UfM Ministerial Conference on women’s rights.

H.E. Dr. Haifa El-Agha, Palestinian Minister of Women’s Affairs, welcomed the participants emphasizing that: “Working on women’s issues cannot be achieved in isolation from the participatory approach and cooperation with all official and non-official institutions in addition to civil society institutions”. She also stressed on the importance of promoting peace and security for Palestinian women in order to allow the advancement and development of women’s status in Palestine.

Ms. Alessandra Viezzer, Head of Cooperation of the European Union in Jerusalem, spoke on behalf of Mr. Ralph Tarraf, Head of Delegation, EU Representative in Jerusalem. She confirmed the importance of empowering women in the political, economic and social spheres: “The constraints of the regional and especially, of the local context, continue to impose restrictions and suffering to Palestinian women. The basic rights and protection offered to citizens are far from being equal between men and women. Palestinian women continue to have fewer opportunities than men in all fields of civil, economic and political life. Among several fields of intervention in favour of Human Rights and Gender Equality, the EU is particularly advocating and working on women economic empowerment, access to labour and resources as a fundamental means to reach gender equality. Only when women will be freed from dependence and restrictions, they will be able to raise their profile, advocate for their rights and constitute a role model in society”.

Dr. Hanan Ashrawi, PLO Executive Committee Member, Member of Palestinian Legislative Council and Head of the PLO Department of Culture and Information, highlighted that: “Palestinian women in exile and in their homeland suffer marginalization and lack of basic protection. What is needed is enhancing linkages for ensuring protection and dis-fragmentation, reducing patriarchal practices and considering the geopolitical context of the occupation”.

Ms. Saeda Al-Atrash, Head of the Gender Unit at the Minister of Social Development, on behalf of Dr. Ibrahim Al-Sha’er, Minister of Social Development stated that: “The Ministry’s recent strategy is built on an integrated and comprehensive approach to address the discrimination and barriers preventing women and girls from



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exercising their rights and accessing services, that greatly increase their risks of experiencing violence.

Mr. Ziad Abu Amr, Deputy of Prime Minister, encouraged better communication and networking with civil society stressing that: “We must bridge the gap between the Palestinian Cabinet and the women movement through systemically networking to issue laws and policies that meet the human rights of women”.

After presenting the Gender Regional Platform the discussion was focused on peace, security and protection mechanisms for Palestinian women. In this regard, Ms. Rima Nazzal, Member of the Secretariat of the General Union of Palestinian Women, underlined the importance of the overall alignment of the Palestinian legislations to International Agreements on women, especially CEDAW. Dr. Ahmad Barak, the Palestinian Authority's Attorney General stated that the law should “emanate from the Palestinian society and take into account the Palestinian cultural context.” However, the debate underlined that cultural realities that are abusive to women and universal women's rights cannot be accepted.

The participants also discussed the need of reforming the Palestinian education system and changing stereotypes and attitudes towards gender equality, the responses to violence against women in the context of occupation, conflict and war, and the importance of activating the social protection mechanisms for Palestinian women and girls as well as international protection and accountability mechanisms in the framework of a women, peace and security agenda (UNSCR 1325).

In addition to the Gender Regional Platform, the national dialogue raised 3 asks and recommendations to the international community and the 4th UfM Ministerial Conference:

- Provide and support platforms to present live testimonies for Palestinian women to the European Union in Brussels and to the Human Rights Council in Geneva to highlight the impact of the Israeli occupation on Palestinian women and urge the Human Rights Council to take all necessary measures to hold the Israeli occupier accountable under International Humanitarian Laws and Human Rights Law.
- Support the convening of an international conference on the Israeli –Palestinian conflict that focus on the implementation of all the UN resolutions related to building of a just durable peace and Palestinian State.
- In order to exercise all their civic rights and strengthen their work towards ending gender based discrimination, Palestinian women need ending of occupation.