

TO:

THE HEADS OF ARAB AND EU STATES

THE UN SECRETARY GENERAL MR. BAN KI-MOON

THE UNDER SECRETARY GENERAL UN WOMEN MS. MICHELLE BACHELET

THE USA PRESIDENT MR. BARACK OBAMA

THE SECRETARY OF STATE OF USA MS. HILARY CLINTON

THE PRESIDENT OF EUROPEAN COMMISSION MR. JOSE MANUEL BARROSO

THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND HIGH REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNION FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND SECURITY POLICY AND MS. CATHERINE ASHTON

**NO DEMOCRACY WITHOUT RESPECT OF WOMENS RIGHTS AS UNIVERSAL HUMAN RIGHTS,  
WITHOUTEQUILITY BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN**

Over 80 women's rights defenders from Maghreb, Mashrek and Europe gathered at the International Conference: *"Role of women, women NGOs and movements in transitional processes towards democracy"* held in Beirut on 10<sup>th</sup> -11<sup>th</sup> June 2011 to examine women's role during the revolutions and uprisings in the Arab world and in historical phases of transition towards democracy; to share experiences and to reaffirm the involvement and power of women in these processes.

We are living in historic times. People in the Arab world are rising up against political dictatorship and corruption; they demand reforms and are organizing towards freedom, human dignity and social justice. Women have been shouldering the responsibilities in all uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Libya, Yemen, Bahrain and Syria. The women's movements are an integral part of the democratic forces for social and economic justice. However women are being systematically excluded from the decision making processes that shape the future of their countries. Confirming this ongoing deliberate marginalization and exclusion of women the Conference strongly questioned the meaning of the existing concept of democracy.

The Conference strongly condemned all forms of oppression, all military acts, repressions and killings used to subdue the progressive social movements; all forms of violence exercised against women, from verbal humiliation to rape, in order to silence their voice. Military interventions and solutions to conflicts neither prevent nor stop sexual abuse against women.

Women's subjugation can't be dissociated from all other forms of oppression. Patriarchal gender power structures that sustain women's subordination prevail during transitions. Hence, the conference underscored the interplay between conservative political regimes, ultra liberal economic systems that are supporting them and the male shaped structures of political parties which do not promote women's rights as a first rank political issue. These conservative trends are united with religious fundamentalist movements to confront the right of women to full citizenship and a life free of violence.

The establishment of Civil States and civil legislation, including family law and personal status law is a prerequisite for achieving equality between women and men. Social justice and democracy are the only way to prevent the raising of a fundamentalist wave on the current political scenes.

EU compromises human rights and women's rights in the ENP for the sake of economic interest and profit, conditioning development on neo liberal policies. The US political, military and economic hegemony, interference, invasions and occupations are detrimental to democratic development in the region. Democracy cannot be used as a tool in the name of which military interventions and invasions can be justified. We refuse the use of military and all other types of violent attacks against civilians as a way to solve conflicts.

The participants expressed their committed support to the ongoing resistance of the women's movements in all the countries and stressed international solidarity with their national demands for aspired social and political change, in the light of women's rights and equality between women and men.

**The Conference therefore:**

- ***Demand* the integrating and installing the principle of equality between women and men in national Constitutions, all spheres of policy making and political parties' agendas in order to ensure that the future policies will respect women's rights as a fundamental principle and equality as a founding value.**
- ***Demand* the adopting of affirmative measures for enhancing participation of women in decision making structures as quotas of minimum 30% representation of women in all positions of power in political and economic sphere in order to address and correct the deficit of democracy and to favor the expression and inclusion of women's needs.**
- ***Call upon* the Heads of States to ensure that legislation and family codes are based on civil law and respect of women's human rights, without intrusion of religions in public, political and legislative spheres; to take urgent measures to change educational system based on patriarchal stereotypes and invest in transforming of cultural patterns which perpetuate subjugation of women in public and private sphere. Women's rights are universal human rights and no abuse of women's physical and psychological integrity can be tolerated in the name of culture, tradition or religion.**
- ***Condemn* the structural violence exercised against women and girls in all its forms - physical, sexual, psychological, economical, institutional and social, and urge the**

**United Nation Security Council, UN Women and national governments to take urgent action to promote and adopt binding legislation with zero tolerance against perpetrators.**

- ***Call upon* EU to base future partnerships on the full respect of fundamental human rights of women and men; to develop strict and reliable tools to assess their implementation as stated in art 2 of the ENP; to assume responsibilities not to agree on enhanced status with any Southern Neighbor State where these rights are violated.**
- ***Call upon* the USA government to end all occupation and take immediate steps towards demilitarization. Call upon President Obama and Secretary of State Hilary Clinton to put an end to the USA administration unconditional support to the Israeli government and to take the side of justice and freedom for all.**
- ***Urge* for the recognition of an independent Palestine State on occupied territories of 1967 war with full sovereignty and with East Jerusalem as its capital and the respect of the right of the Palestinians to return to their home land as a necessary step and a precondition for transparent and participatory comprehensive peace process in the whole Middle East Region that will facilitate the democratic transitions and enhance the respect of human rights of women and men.**

**Beirut, 12<sup>th</sup> June 2011**