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Inter-Ministerial Committee
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EuroMed Feminist Initiative
المبادرة النسوية الأورو متوسطية
Initiative Féministe EuroMed

Launching the 2021 Regional Index on Violence against Women and Girls

Amman, 21 May 2022

The 2021 Regional Index on Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) was launched during the two-day conference organised by EuroMed Feminist Initiative in partnership with Jordan Inter-Ministerial Committee for Women's Empowerment, in the frame of the EU funded regional program "Combating VAWG in the South Mediterranean".

The event was attended by ministers, governmental officials, experts, and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) representatives from Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia, as well as by representatives of the secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM).

At the opening session, Ms. Lilian Halls-French Co-President EuroMed Feminist Initiative, emphasized that *"the Regional Index is a precious and major tool for change as it supports a comprehensive approach to VAWG"* stressing the importance of the Index results for the follow up on the implementation of the UfM Ministerial Declaration on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society (Cairo 2017) in the area of combating VAWG.

H.E. Dr. John Paul Grech, Ambassador, DSG Social and Civil Affairs Division of the UfM underlined the importance of the Index in the general efforts in combatting VAWG, stating *"VAWG is a phenomenon that should be prevented by means of public awareness campaigns, private trainings and cooperation between the public bodies and civil societies. A successful approach towards VAWG requires a coordinated action at all levels and among all sectors"*.

H.E. Ms. Wafa Bani Mustafa, Minister of State for Legal Affairs and Chairperson of the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Women's Empowerment in Jordan declared *"Today, all need to stand together to eliminate VAWG and be firm in ending all forms of impunity, and compensating women who have been subjected to violence for the damages they have suffered. A comprehensive preventive approach, which is accompanied by policies and legal, administrative, and cultural measures must be developed to enhance the protection of women from all forms of violence"*.

The following high-level ministerial panel, moderated by H.E. Reem Abou Hassan, featured the interventions of H.E. Ms. Wafa Bani Mustafa, H.E. Ms. Haifa Abu Ghazaleh, Assistant Secretary General of League of Arab States, H.E. Ms. Amal Hamad, Palestinian Minister of Women's Affairs, H.E. Ms. Aawatif Hayar, Moroccan Minister of Solidarity, Social Integration and Ms. Amal Abdelminem, Director of Women Complaint Office in Egypt, elaborated on the achievements in combating VAWG in each country, as well as challenges still facing women, like persisting discriminatory legislations, widening provision of services to victims, and ensuring gender sensitive budgets, while putting a particular focus on the need to invest in prevention programs.

Mr. Thaker Alzghool, Head Researcher of the Regional Civil Society Observatory (RCSO), reminded that the Regional Index on VAWG was launched in 2020, and aims to help implementing a continuous follow up, data collection of laws and policies, and analyses of the barometer results. During 2021,



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with the support of a regional experts' group, a scoring methodology was adopted, and the scoring of all indicators was accomplished through the participation of governments and CSOs in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia.

During the conference, countries' scores and results were presented by governmental and civil society experts, followed by discussions revolving around the international standards for protection of women from VAWG, progress and areas of improvement according to the Index results, and welcoming Iraq as the next country to join the Index.

The conference provided recommendations for national follow up mechanism to follow up on the Index and concrete policy recommendations in the area of combating VAWG to the next UfM Ministerial meeting, which will be held in October 2022 in Spain. Finally, the conference concluded with an international call for adopting a comprehensive approach and legislations to combat VAWG, enabling women to live free from violence and discrimination.