

# EUROMED “Role of Women in Economic Life” Programme Quarterly Newsletter

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A quarterly newsletter published by the Euromed **Role of Women in Economic Life** Programme for the Mediterranean region funded by the European Commission.

## Introduction :

Dear Friends and Colleagues,  
We are pleased to share with you our 5th quarterly newsletter which continues to provide you with a broad overview of our latest news, events updates, and useful resources on women's empowerment in the Mediterranean.

This issue features highlights of the regional seminar titled National Women's Machineries in the Mediterranean: Lessons Learned and Strategies for the Future organized by the Euromed RWEL programme in cooperation with the Centre of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR) in Tunisia.

This issue includes two interviews with prominent seminar participants: Dr. Zahira Kamal, Director of the Palestinian Women's Research and Documentation Centre, UNESCO and former Minister of Women's Affairs in Palestine; and Sira Astor, the Chairperson of the Syrian Commission for Family Affairs who discuss relevant issues on the effectiveness of national machineries in promoting change as well as the dynamics of a complementary relationship with civil society.

We also provide our readers with insights on the Encyclopaedia of Women in Islamic Cultures (EWIC); a ground breaking research project that has spanned 12 years so far and brought in more than 1000 authors and contributors.

Finally, we're pleased to invite you to check our revamped website at [www.euromedwomensrights.net](http://www.euromedwomensrights.net) which provides user-friendly access to information, news, resources as well as on-line versions of RWEL publications.

We appreciate your comments, suggestions and/or contributions to this newsletter.

Enjoy reading!  
RWEL Programme Team



## NATIONAL WOMEN MACHINERIES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN SHARE LESSONS LEARNED & FUTURE STRATEGIES

The EUROMED Role of Women in Economic Life Programme, in cooperation with the Centre of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR) concluded on the 29th January a two-day regional seminar in Tunisia titled “National Women's Machineries in Mediterranean Partner Countries: Lessons Learned and Strategies for the future”.

The event brought together more than 70 participants representing the Mediterranean authorities entrusted with gender equality and women's rights, policy experts, civil society activists, research institutions, regional and international organizations concerned with gender in the Arab Mediterranean Countries including UNIFEM, ESCWA, The League of Arab States, UNDP, and UNECA among others.

Over the two days, participants engaged in heated debates on the challenges as well as opportunities for strengthening national women's machineries in the Mediterranean region and enabling

them to effectively represent women's rights and priorities at the policy making level.

H.E. Dr. Sarra Kanoun Jarraya, Minister of Women, Family, Child and Elderly Affairs in Tunisia gave an inaugural speech to the high level seminar as well as Mr. Bernard Phillipe, First Counsellor, at the European Commission Delegation in Tunisia who provided insights on the conclusions and follow up to the Euromed Ministerial Conference on Strengthening the role of Women in Society (Istanbul 2006). In her speech, H.E. Minister Jarraya stressed the need for entrusting national machineries with well-defined missions, political commitment, integrated work programmes, linkages with civil society organizations as well as appropriate financial and human resources as key determinants that underpin the ability of national women's machineries to bring about significant transformations in women's status in the region.

(continued on page 2)



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This event on National Women's Machineries followed an initial regional seminar held in Cairo in June 2007, providing an opportunity to present the outcomes of research conducted in ten southern Mediterranean countries. In addition to assessing the effectiveness of the national mechanisms for gender equality, the studies as well as the seminars set out to develop strategic objectives for policy advocacy that can reinforce women's economic empowerment.

While substantial progress was made in the formation of structures and mechanisms in the Mediterranean region since Beijing '95, the seminar discussions brought forward some of the key factors that limit the

effectiveness of NWM in varying degrees across the Mediterranean region. These include the unclear mandates and role of NWMs; the lack of transparency and accountability; the lack of autonomy and political commitment; inadequate expertise and funds; and, in particular, weak links with civil society organizations

Among the seminar conclusions were the identification of critical areas to be addressed and formulated for policy advocacy and wider dissemination. These include building a strategic framework for national mechanisms; strengthening the role and mandate of NWMs; ensuring adequate human and financial resources; promoting good governance; institutional enhancement and capacity development;

strengthening partnership with civil society organizations; strengthening relations with media; and establishing regional coordination mechanisms.

It is expected that CAWTAR as a regional women's training and research centre is well placed to play an important role as a catalyst for follow-up actions and information dissemination in consultation with the NWMs and civil society organizations working on women's rights and other key actors in the region, such as ESCWA, League of Arab States, UNIFEM, UNDP, and others.

Seminar report, presentations, abstracts and list of participants are available on the programme's website at:

[www.euromedwomensrights.net](http://www.euromedwomensrights.net)

## What do MEDITERRANEAN Authorities and Experts have to say on National Women's Machineries?

### INTERVIEWS WITH SELECTED EXPERTS AND GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES

#### Interviews

#### INTERVIEW WITH DR. ZAHIRA KAMAL

Director of the Palestinian Women's Research and Documentation Centre UNESCO and former minister of Women's Affairs- Palestine

You have pointed to the important role played by civil society in developing the status of women in society, what do you think should be made available to make such a relationship successful and to improve it within NGOs and government agencies alike?

First of all it is necessary to have partners with respect to the fulfilment of missions undertaken by both the national mechanisms and civil society.

This relationship is built on the integration of all stakeholders. Both national agencies and civil society need to act as partners from the outset, not only coordinate activities or workshops. They are partners in the process of planning, implementation, and monitoring and, ultimately, evaluation. Therefore, I believe that the national mechanism is setting the working strategy and procedures for the integration of such a strategy in cooperation and through partnering with the NGOs and government institutions concerned, as well as with the private sector and specialized academics. After setting this strategy, implementation begins, which involves tasks on policy and legislative levels. Within this process the ministry must act as the voice of civil society organizations in the government. As such, it shall discuss the policies based on case studies that reflect the reality and the status

quo, and the means for improving the situation. Thus far is the role that should be played by the competent ministry or national mechanism within the ministry at the stage of implementation. On the other hand, when we come to the issues that need actual implementation on the ground, and which involves communication with the target groups, even if this even if this is only done for information gathering purposes, this falls within the role of the NGOs. In that way we will achieve integration without crossing boundaries or overlapping efforts. Also, the NGOs will feel that they are playing a significant role, national mechanism within the ministry at the stage of implementation. On the other hand, when we come to the issues that need actual implementation on the ground, and which involves communication with the target groups, especially with the women base vis-à-vis solving women's problems, and addressing women's needs via influencing the government and taking the issues up to the decision makers through the national mechanism that ultimately yields the results and shares them with NGOs in turn. As such, we shall have a mutual complementary relationship.

If we look at some of the examples from reality, we will notice that there are certainly some obstacles that preclude the building of this mutual relationship in the ideal manner you



have described.

There are many success stories that I would like to refer to in the outset, and that really do exist on the ground. If we take for instance the preparation of the ministry's annual plan and action programme, we notice that this used to be done in full cooperation with civil society. I am pointing here, in particular, to the period during which I presided over the Ministry of Women's Affairs and later I shall address the obstacles. The second success story is embodied in the implementation of a campaign for extending the scope of women's participation in the parliament and the municipalities, which entailed the

amendment of the municipality law to guarantee the incorporation of women in 2005. The ministry relied on the NGOs to steer this campaign on the grassroots level; however, the outcome of this campaign in the form of recommendations was adopted by the ministry, and a legal demand was filed to amend the law as well as the executive regulations of the Law on elections. This also entailed the monitoring of this process by the ministry concerning the observation of the ministers who voted for this amendment. The ministry played a role in involving civil society organizations to influence and pressurize the ministries that had reservations on the amendment of the law, until we were eventually able to have this law approved. I believe that this is one of the best laws in this area because it is not based on the allocation of a specific number of seats, or the 'quota' system, as it is currently implemented in Jordan. On the contrary, it provides for 20% representation by women within the elections with guaranteed positions within the candidate lists, which means that this percentage can go higher.

The second point relates to the issue of training. We held a meeting with all NGOs that offer training services to women. We agreed that to guarantee success of this election process, civil society organizations must play their role in training women on leadership skills, the preparation of an election platform, running the elections, and so forth. Nonetheless, once the women occupy parliamentary seats, the role of the ministry comes in. They work in a methodological manner on issues relating to gender, review plans from a gender perspective, discuss the possible roles by women within the government, and coordinate with the ministers concerning the problems that can be voiced to the decision makers. As such, there is full integration between the national machinery concerned with women and NGOs to achieve tangible results.

However, with the change of ministries, another ministry assumed, which did not believe in gender issues. This new ministry perceived that gender issues involve certain aspects that are contradictory to the Islamic Shari'ah tenets and the like. The first phase had witnessed the dissolution of the partnerships with the NGOs. The ministry rather tried to attract the public through implementing service-oriented programs and offering aids, in an attempt to play a role visible to the public. But the ministry had forsaken its planning role on the level of

policies, planning, and monitoring, and the NGOs rejected this role.

The main problem characterizing the relationship with NGOs becomes manifest when the ministry tries to play an implementation role on the ground as a replacement of civil society. I would like to note here that the designation of roles during the planning process is deemed to be a highly significant step, because this means the allocation of roles to be played by the ministry in cooperation with other ministries, while other roles are mandated to civil society, and a third set are played in partnership between the ministry and the NGOs. The ministry can also help civil society fund the various programmes and projects that they undertake. Sometimes there is a fear of competition over funding sources between the ministry, on the one hand, and the civil society, on the other. However, the ministry is not in a position of competition.

For instance, we have encouraged direct funding from international organizations and civil society without any mediation by the ministry except with respect to the identification of the targets and priorities to be set. This is why NGOs at times resorted to the Review Department affiliated with the ministry to review the proposals of projects filed with the international agencies. The ministry then would offer the required training.

Furthermore, we have offered to the NGOs a list of the funding institutions, and we direct the associations to the needs in the communities based on the national statistics and data. We also played a role in identifying NGOs working on similar issues to allow for the opportunity of networking among these bodies, and the possibility of presenting joint proposals.

I have another example relating to marketing. It is well known that NGOs face this problem of marketing; this is why we have networked them with marketing companies to help them find solutions with respect to marketing products made by the women.

In a nutshell, this national machinery must be a source of support to NGOs. Therefore, one of the main obstacles on the road to partnership is this overlap of roles and competition at times between the national machinery and the NGOs, especially when the ministry acts as an implementation body.

Despite the various gains achieved on the level of improving the status of women in the Arab-Mediterranean

area, there is still a dire need for strengthening national women's machineries and civil society alike. How can such forums produce some practical recommendations that can be put into effect?

This process requires specialization. I cannot imagine that all the topics relating to the national women's machineries can be tackled profoundly in a single seminar with general themes.

This is why designation of roles is important. On the level of the Arab League, we have legal forums, media forums, and so on. I believe that the more specialized we are, the more potential for success we shall have. Thus, it is assumed that future meetings should be more specialized and more focused on a single issue, so that we can eventually arrive at recommendations.

## Interviews

### INTERVIEW WITH MS. SIRA ASTOR, CHAIRPERSON OF THE SYRIAN COMMISSION FOR FAMILY AFFAIRS

In light of your expertise as the head of the Syrian Commission, what do you think are the most important policies focused on by the Syrian national machinery to improve the status of women?

The Syrian Commission for Family Affairs has been recently established; it is only three years old. It is a new national institution founded for the making of policies and strategies concerning the family and/or the components of the family, as well as updating laws and legislations; we try to keep away as much as we can from implementation matters. As for our agenda in Syria, we focus on two significant issues: first, a strategy for the advancement of women, which had been approved already, and we are at the stage of developing the executive plan thereof, covering the economic, social, and legal sides. Second, we are interested in childhood which is part of the scope of the Commission's work; and in this regard we are about to conclude the analysis for the current situation of comprehensive childhood. Upon finalizing this analysis, the preparation of the implementation plan will be embarked on.

At the same time we are conducting a quantitative research nationwide about violence against women to collect quantitative information, data and indicators that would enable us to set a plan to protect women from all forms of violence. We are also at the final stages for fine-tuning all the reservations against the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Moreover, We are also working on building national capacities in the field of gender. In this regard we are acting as the liaison point, such as finding appropriate funding, locating consultants, offering training in areas relating to women and family. We offer this service both to ministries and to other human resources. The training of social workers during the coming period is deemed to be the most important activity in the field of capacity building, because we are about to establish the first shelter for women in Syria under the umbrella of Ministry of Social Affairs. We also offer training for people of different professions, such as media workers or attorneys-at-law on the issue of gender. There are also a number of laws that we would like to address on two levels: first, the changing or the amendment of already existing laws,

and second advocacy to stimulate the decision makers, local community, and parliamentarians to pass such laws.

During the seminar you maintained that your relationship with civil society is based on integration. How do you account for this integration and are there any problems you are currently working to solve?

With respect to civil society there are some cross-cutting themes that are similar in all Arab countries. The main problem that we face is the lack of specialization. On the other hand, there are very significant issues where NGOs lack appropriate human capacity to address; therefore, they represent the top of our priorities. Our second contribution is that NGOs in Syria are affiliated to a competent ministry regulating their work, the Ministry of Social Affairs. In reality this partnership is not deep-rooted. However, we started to invite civil society to propose policies and reports, in a consultation capacity; on the other end of the spectrum, the involvement of civil society is sought when drafting national reports. However, partnership in the full sense of the word is still a work in progress, as the civil society in Syria is not yet fully mature and developed. We have to start – and we have actually started – on the transformation from a civil society focused on offering charity work, to become a development-oriented society that has a say in addressing feminist issues not just women's problems. Our relationship is maturing, and needs more work on both sides of the divide, in order to create an environment of mutual trust: a trust by the government in NGOs and their ability to play a particular role, and a similar degree of confidence by civil society that the government is the implementing hand that passes the laws. Thus, it is really a relationship based on integrated work, however, necessitating a mutual awareness of the important role played by each party.

From your perspective, how can we make the best use of the studies evaluating national machineries of women conducted by Euromed programme "Role of Women in Economic Life", as well as other studies and forums concerned with national women's machineries?

I trust that the implementation of recommendations needs to be done



on two levels: the internal level, by passing all the recommendations to all national women's machineries, and the regional level, on which a general strategy can be placed. This is proposed due to the wide differences among countries concerning these national women's machineries as well as the level of performance of civil society. Each country can then draw from this strategy strains that could be implemented according to their respective priorities. I believe that it would be useful to produce such a general strategy setting the major points via a regional Arab organization, where the Arab League may participate. But I think we are still in the phase of research and study and this needs to take enough time to be able to delineate the status quo. We need also to work within a deadline, because research may take too long, to the extent that a strategy reached thereon would be useless and outdated. Thus, we need to work more dynamically. I think that the presence of the heads of national women's machineries in these seminars is highly essential, as it facilitates passing these recommendations on to decision makers. Even when such recommendations are not implemented at times, being open to the experiences of others simply adds to your own experience and makes you farsighted.

## An EYE ON EOWEL Projects

### Economic Empowerment for Rural Palestinian Women (EERPW) project concludes two years of partnership

November 25 - 28th were special days for women entrepreneurs from Israel, the Palestinian Authority and Italy, who came together in Jerusalem to meet with one another, form support systems and plan for possible future joint work. The women, who all specialize in design, production and marketing of their arts - ceramics, jewellery, puppets, painting and more - came from the Palestinian Authority, Israel, and Italy.

The women participants presented their personal stories of how their dreams of establishing businesses, based on their crafts and art, came to fruition, the challenges they faced and the support they received. The women exhibited their products, visited women's enterprises in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Lakiya, and came together throughout the three days in social and informal interactions.

This networking conference marked two years of a joint project titled "Economic Empowerment for Rural Palestinian Women" (EERPW) implemented in partnership between Negev Institute for Strategies of Peace and Development Paradise (NISPED) Israel, Young Entrepreneurs Palestine (YEP), Legalloop Italy, and Diesis Coop, Belgium funded by the EUROMED Regional programme which aimed to enhance opportunities for women in economic life.

Opening remarks made by Dr. Yehudah Paz, Chairperson of NISPED; Hazem Kawasmi, Vice-President from YEP; and Stefania Marcone, Chief, International Relations Office LEGACOO, stressed the importance of joining European, Palestinian and Israelis together in peaceful, economic endeavours and in partnerships for peace and development.

The success of the conference found expression in a number of Palestinian - Israeli proposals for joint economic cooperation which were raised during the conference closing plenum. These require additional joint entrepreneurial and marketing training and actions. All of the project partners agreed that it is essential to explore these matters in concrete detail so as to make possible their implementation. In view of that EERPW was granted a 3 months extension and will end by June 2008.

**For more information about the EERPW project, contact:**

Rafiq Goldman, Project coordinator

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### FOSTERING OPPORTUNITIES FOR HOME-BASED WOMEN WORKERS: PROJECT INSIGHTS FROM TURKEY AND MORROCCO

Since the outset of the project in January 2005, "Creating new opportunities for marginalised Home Based Working Women (HBWW) set out to support home-based women workers in Morocco and Turkey, particularly those who are the sole providers for their families, in their endeavour to build sustainable businesses so as to improve their quality of life.

October 2007 marked the finalization of HBWW project implemented in partnership between Planet Finance, Morocco; Contemporary Women and Youth Foundation and Hacettepe University in Turkey. The project partners employed different – but complementary approaches to foster opportunities for marginalized home-based women workers who produce textile, handicrafts, embroidery, and wool-based goods at home for sale in the market and are considered among the poorest in the informal sector.

The creation of the Women Artisans Network is a unique initiative established in Morocco to promote the work of women crafts workers, providing them with capacity building, marketing outlets, networking opportunities at national, regional and international levels.

Morocco's approach placed greater emphasis on micro credit through building the capacity of national NGO partners that extend financial and non-financial services to women artisans. In contrast, Turkey opted for a gender approach to the project that focused primarily on empowerment training to strengthen women's capability, self confidence, awareness raising on social security, labour issues and breaking the cycles of poverty.

The establishment of "From Cocoon to Silk: Home-based Working Women Cooperative" in the Ankara region founded and managed by 25 target beneficiaries, is considered one of the key project achievements in Turkey.

It's noteworthy that home workers are increasingly being linked to global trade and industrial production, but these independent workers do not benefit from the opportunities of globalization. In the MENA countries, there are some 4

million home-based self-employed women. Often their work is the family's main source of income.

**For more information please contact:**

Fatima-Zahra Benharbet, Secretary General; Planet [Financefbenharbet@planetfinance.org](mailto:Financefbenharbet@planetfinance.org)

[www.womenartisansnetwork.org](http://www.womenartisansnetwork.org)

Gul Erdost, Contemporary Women and Youth Foundation (CWYF), Turkey [gulredost@yahoo.com](mailto:gulredost@yahoo.com)

## The General Editor of the Encyclopaedia of Women and Islamic Cultures speaks with RWEL team on this global research project

the launching of the Arabic translation of Volume I of the "Encyclopaedia of Women and Islamic Cultures (EWIC)" was held at the American University in Cairo (AUC) on December 12, 2007. Volume I consists of Methodologies, Paradigms and Sources for Studying Women and Islamic Cultures; written by hundreds of prominent scholars from all around the globe, under the editorship of Dr. Suad Joseph, Department of Anthropology, University of California.

The Encyclopaedia of Women and Islamic Cultures (EWIC) is an interdisciplinary, transhistorical, and global project embracing women and Islamic cultures in every region where there have been significant Muslim populations. It aims to cover every topic for which there is significant research, examining these regions from the period just before the rise of Islam to the present. The project is an effort, spanning over 12 years so far to bring together upwards of 1,000 scholars worldwide to write critical essays on women and Islamic cultures. EWIC aims both to cover the broad sweep of topics to inform the general audience and to take on cutting-edge issues to stimulate new research and advance the frontiers of knowledge.

### Speaking Out on EWIC project: An Interview with Suad Joseph - Professor of Anthropology and Women and Gender Studies at the University of California, Davis and Director of the Middle East/South Asia Studies Program



As suggested by the preview of the Encyclopaedia of Women in Islamic Cultures, this project started as a background research that has grown into a more ambitious project. Briefly describe how the idea of this ground-breaking reference has evolved?

The idea was first put forward in 1994 by Peri Bearman; an editor in Brill Publisher who envisioned the publication of three volume encyclopaedia of 1500 words on women in Islam. For me, this title implied certain assumptions that I did not want to pursue. In 1995, we met and it took 3 years from 1995-1998 to develop the framework and the contract until we signed the contract in 1998. By that time, Peri Bearman has left and several editors came in place. In 1999, we held the first editorial board meeting to select the advisory board and we also settled on the title of Encyclopaedia of women in Islamic Cultures. By 2003, the first volume appeared, and the entire publication in all volumes was completed between 2003-2008 with a total of 1246 articles and 907 authors in total. The Encyclopaedia has a total of 2 million words, and although Brill has allocated 4 million words, it was difficult

to find authors for a lot of topics.

In January 2009, the first supplement of the on-line edition will come out, and new materials will be added.

Among the new topics to be addressed will be a focus on institutions that produce knowledge on Muslim women, articles on cinema, Television, film, satellite TV and web representation, blogs that has to do with women in Islamic cultures, as well as gender and national security regimes, gender and academic freedom, women and labour practices, Muslim youth, among others.

The approach that was undertaken in carrying out EWIC project, over 12 years so far, must have some key learnings that are of relevance to other scholars engaged in transnational research? What would you say are those key learnings?

We tried to have authors from all over the world - not just US based or Europe-based authors. We were concerned to cover all the regions; not only the Middle East and I think we did a fair effort to get a fair distribution of the world where Muslim women were present. South East Asia, however, was one region that was underrepresented. Also, we were cautious that the writing is not done by a handful of authors, so of the 907 authors, 72% only wrote one article, 91% wrote one or two articles and 96% of all the articles were single authored. We also tried to focus on specific countries and regions, with 1151 article of all 1246 articles focusing one a country or region, of which 21% is on Arab states.

What are some of the key insights that emerge from the Encyclopaedia of Women in Islamic Cultures?

The incredible variability of Islamic cultures, which is the reason for cultures, as opposed to one culture; the incredible

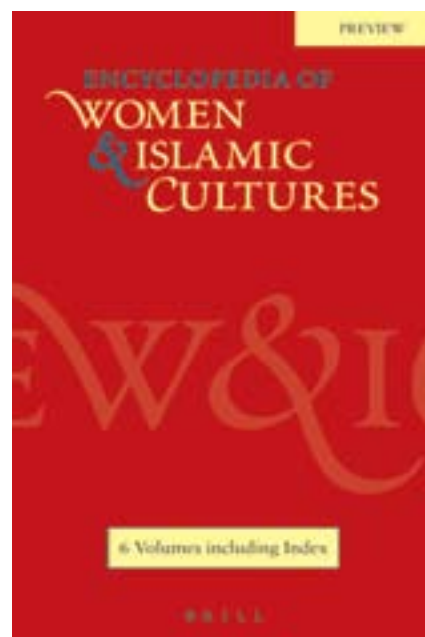
variability of the roles of women. While, there is significant inequality, it's not clear that Islam is the predominant cause. One of the things we set out to see is the variability of Islam.

There are multiple determinants of inequality in political, cultural and economic spheres.

We'd like to provide enough data to compare family laws in Muslim cultures. But we realize that it's a constant work in progress. We were working consciously against an "authoritative notion of an encyclopaedia", and were constantly work to destabilize categories of analysis as they present themselves differently in different societies and contexts.

For more on the Encyclopaedia, and to download Arabic translation of Volume 1:

<http://sjoseph.ucdavis.edu/ewic/index.htm>



## RECENT GENDER RESOURCES

### EUROMED ROLE OF WOMEN IN ECONOMIC LIFE PROGRAMME

#### Assessment of National Women's Machineries in 10 Mediterranean Partner Countries

The assessments examine the evolution and effectiveness of national women's machineries in Algeria; Egypt; Israel; Jordan; Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey. They provide provided a useful comparison of these experiences and highlighted some of the common issues faced by these machineries in their efforts to mainstream gender throughout government policy and decision-making.

Available online in English and Arabic at [www.euromedwomensrights.net](http://www.euromedwomensrights.net)

### INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR DEMOCRACY AND ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE

#### Designing for Equality :Best-fit, medium-fit and non-favourable combinations of electoral systems and gender quotas (Arabic)

This publication assesses how women's representation can be increased under different combinations of electoral systems and quotas. It aims to serve as a reference tool for all those who work to increase women's representation in politics .In its Arabic translation, the publication responds to increasing demands from the Arab World for high-quality knowledge tools.

[http://www.idea.int/publications/designing\\_for\\_equality/ar.cfm](http://www.idea.int/publications/designing_for_equality/ar.cfm)

### INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATION

#### Global employment trends for women – Brief, March 2007

The Global Employment Trends for Women Brief 2007 focuses on whether the tendency toward increased participation has continued more recently and whether women have found enough decent and productive jobs to really enable them to use their potential in the labour market and achieve economic independence. An updated Global Employment Trends for Women, focusing on the situation of working women worldwide, will be made available in three languages (English, French and Spanish) on March 7, 2008.

Available at: <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/asro/jakarta/publ/gender.htm>

### WOODROW WILSON INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR SCHOLARS

#### Strategies for Enhancing Women's Rights in the Middle East and North Africa

This report documents the proceedings of three workshops aimed at enhancing women's rights and participation in the MENA region. The workshops drew on the experiences of women from across the region and looked at developing strategies for change.

Available at: <http://www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/gender&id=33754&type=Document>

## USEFUL WEBSITES

WomenWatch: Directory of Women UN Resources on Gender and Women's Issues

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/asp/user/list.asp-ParentID=3006.htm>

International Labour Organization (ILO) – Gender Equality Tool Homepage

<http://www.ilo.org/dyn/gender/gender.home>

OECD Gender, Institutions and Development Data Base

[http://www.oecd.org/document/16/0,3343,en\\_2649\\_33979\\_39323280\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/16/0,3343,en_2649_33979_39323280_1_1_1_1,00.html)

## EVENTS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

### RWEL Regional Training Workshop on Gender, Marketing and Trade 14 - 16 April, Istanbul –Turkey.

The Euromed Role of Women in Economic Life Programme holds a 3-day regional training workshop on 14-16th April 2008 in Istanbul, Turkey targeting NGOs supporting enterprise development and women's economic participation in the MEDITERRANEAN region. The primary aim of the training workshop is to develop the capacity of selected civil society organizations supporting women's economic participation as well as women entrepreneurs to identify practical and relevant ways to tackle the marketing challenge. More information available on [www.euromedwomensrights.net](http://www.euromedwomensrights.net)

## Meeting entitled “Resource Mobilization for Women’s Rights Organizations and Movements in the Middle East and North Africa”

Marrakech, Morocco, 20-22 April 2008

This meeting will bring together around 100 participants to create a space for donors, women's rights organizations and networks, to do common analysis of the funding situation in the MENA region, as it relates to advancing women's rights agendas and strengthening progressive women's movements.

For more information contact [menameeting@awid.org](mailto:menameeting@awid.org) or visit [http://www.awid.org/go.php?pg=where\\_is\\_money](http://www.awid.org/go.php?pg=where_is_money)

## Consultative Meeting on Economic Situation Analysis on Women in the Mediterranean 26-27 May – Cyprus

The Euromed RWEL programme holds a two-day consultative meeting with selected experts, including the national researchers, experts, regional research centres, selected economic institutions and regional/international agencies. The meeting solicits feedback on the economic situation analysis studies commissioned by the RWEL programme in addition to a comparative analysis to examine the economic situation of women in 8 Mediterranean Partner Countries and arrive at recommendations on further dissemination and follow-up action.

## World Economic Forum on the Middle East – Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt 20-22 May 2008

The World Economic Forum (WEF) on the Middle East will be held in Sharm El Sheikh in Egypt from May 20 to 22, 2006. The theme of this year's WEF Middle East meeting is the Promise of the New Generation - which will spark discussion on creating a new and bright future for the youthful population of the MENA region as well as help direct the agenda of action in the coming years. The focus of the three-day event will be the regional business agenda; the rule of law and democracy; the challenge of employment and migration; peace, security and international relations; and youth, culture and identity in the Middle East.

## WOMNET International Conference "Euromed – A Region on the Move: Strengthening Civil Society and Gender Equality in the Euromed Region"

2 - 4 June 2008, Gustav-Stresemann-Institut, Bonn, Germany

The WOMNET international conference will focus on the Conclusions of the Euromed Ministerial Conference on strengthening the role of women in Society held in Istanbul 2006, review their implementation and analyse the changes that have been achieved so far. The conference aims to bring together NGOs from the Euro-Mediterranean countries to develop new milestones and recommendations in order to sustain gender equality in the region. Additionally, NGOs will receive information on goals, strategies and funding opportunities of EU programmes. The conference will gather representatives of civil society from the networks of WOMNET, the Euromed NGO Platform, Care Austria, the Anna Lindh Foundation and the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (MIGS). [www.womnet.de](http://www.womnet.de)

## EUROMED ROLE OF WOMEN IN ECONOMIC LIFE REVAMPS ITS WEBSITE

Check out the revamped website of RWEL Programme at: [www.euromedwomensrights.net](http://www.euromedwomensrights.net)

We're keen to know your comments/suggestions:

[rwel.support@britishcouncil.org.eg](mailto:rwel.support@britishcouncil.org.eg)

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