

Euro-Med Ministerial Conclusions on STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN SOCIETY

Impact in Jordan



This project is in partnership with
Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs

Study conducted by

Euromed Feminist Initiative IFE-EFI

Researcher Dr. Wafa Alkhadra



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This study has been made based on the contributions of the persons participating in the in-depth interviews and in the questionnaires. The content should be on no account considered as reflecting the official position of the European Union, the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs or Euromed Feminist Initiative IFE-EFI. There is no copyright attached to this publication. It may be reproduced in whole or in part without prior permission from IFE-EFI. However, the source must be acknowledged.

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Acronyms

| | |
|----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| BPfA | Beijing Platform for Action |
| CAT | Convention Against Torture |
| CEDAW | Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women |
| CSOs | Civil Society Organizations |
| EU | European Union |
| Euro-Med | Euro Mediterranean |
| ICPD | International Conference on Population and Development |
| IFA | Istanbul Framework of Action |
| IFE-EFI | Euromed Feminist Initiative |
| ILO | International Labor Organization |
| SDGs | Sustainable Development Goals |
| MDG | Millennium Development Goals |
| MENA | Middle East and North Africa |
| MOPPA | Ministry of Parliamentary and Political Affairs |
| NGOs | Non-Governmental Organizations |
| UfM | Union for Mediterranean |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNSCR | United Nations Security Council Resolution |

FOREWORD

The Ministerial Conclusions as a result of the Euro-Med Ministerial Process on strengthening the role of women in society, known also as the Istanbul Marrakesh Process, is a political declaratory document agreed upon by governments and indicating their political will and commitment for action to improve the status of women's rights and promote gender equality in their respective countries and in the whole region. With these Conclusions, the governments recognize the need to address existing inequalities and gender-based discrimination. The Ministerial Conclusions have therefore become a unique regional women's rights tool.

The Istanbul Marrakesh Process has paved a way for the women's movement in the Arab world and Europe to strengthen a common feminist analysis and address issues of mutual interest across the Mediterranean such as women's participation in public, political and economic spheres, gender sensitive education, improved legislation and its implementation, violence against women, and gender stereotypes. It enabled the development of strong common speech and needed solidarity cooperation for transformative changes of the global patriarchal system. Furthermore, the Euro-Med Ministerial Process widened the opportunity for a multi-stakeholder dialogue between women's rights organizations and the decision makers on equality between women and men and strengthening women's participation in all spheres of life. It helped strengthen a common agenda for equality between women and men on a regional and national level.

Euromed Feminist Initiative IFE-EFI follows closely the Ministerial Process. In 2011, IFE-EFI launched a regional campaign "*Equality First*" to promote equality between women and men in the Euro-Mediterranean region and highlight the link between women's rights and democracy building. The campaign supports the Ministerial Process as a major regional tool for improving women's rights. It promotes the Ministerial Conclusions as a part of the international women's rights framework linked with the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

(CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA), the United Nation Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and the subsequent ones, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. This framework affirms gender equality as both a goal in itself and a condition for the achievement of other goals and development. Today, more than ever it is important to strengthen the approach to the international conventions and the regional and national tools for gender equality as parts of one framework promoting women's rights as universal human rights.

The Euro-Med Conference "*Women's Rights and Democracy Building: Promoting a Common Agenda for Equality between Women and Men*" that took place in June 2013 in Amman was a culmination of this campaign and issued recommendations for the Ministerial Conference Paris, September 2013. The Paris Ministerial Conclusions are the most important common political reference for promoting women's rights and gender equality in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

The present study aims to contribute to spreading awareness of the Ministerial Conclusions in Jordan and to relate the perception in Jordan of their impact and role as a policy tool. We believe it will contribute to sustaining the ongoing dialogue with civil society and will help decision-makers take concrete action that will affirm Jordan's leading role in the Ministerial Process.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Euro-Med Ministerial Process on “Strengthening the Role of Women in Society”, also known as the Istanbul - Marrakesh process, is a major tool for promoting and supporting women’s rights and gender equality during the on-going changes in the region. The process started with the first Ministerial Conference that took place in 2006 in Istanbul, resulting in the adoption of the Istanbul Common Framework of Action 2006-2011. The next Ministerial Conference was held in 2009 in Marrakesh. The third took place in September 2013 in Paris and reaffirmed the importance of this process, especially in the context of the on-going political transformations across the Southern Mediterranean. The Ministers reaffirmed the obligation to the international women’s rights instruments to which their states are parties, as well as their commitment to promote, “de jure and de facto, equality between women and men in their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights”.

Jordan plays a crucial role in this process. The country hosted two regional multi-stakeholder dialogues as well as the Euro-Med Women’s Rights Conference, gathering stakeholders and civil society that submitted recommendations to the Paris Ministerial.

This led Euromed Feminist Initiative IFE–EFI to undertake a project titled “Improving Gender Equality and Democratic Governance in Jordan” under the program of the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs (MOPPA) “Support to Democratic Governance in Jordan” funded by the EU. As part of the project, this study strives to offer better knowledge of the perception, role, and impact of the Ministerial Conclusions in Jordan. It also provides an up-to-date overview of the status of women’s rights in Jordan and elaborates on policy recommendations in the context of the upcoming 4th Ministerial Conference planned for 2016.

The study has been developed in three phases: a desk study, a qualitative phase of in-depth interviews as well as focus group discussions, and a quantitative phase of questionnaires.

The desk study aimed to provide an overview of the status of women's civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights in Jordan today, as well as limitations to their complete attainment. While the status of Jordanian women has improved considerably in regards to education, health, and life expectancy, advances in these spheres have yet to fully bridge the gender gap. Constraints persist in other areas such as representation and participation in the public and political sphere, education and gender stereotypical representation of women, employment and visible advances in the labour force, and equities in the social domain. These are exacerbated by legal constraints. Gender disparity in Jordan has increased with the spread of conservatism and nationalism, causing regressive backlash against women's rights.

The qualitative phase gathered the opinions of major Jordanian actors in social and political life regarding the Ministerial Conclusions and the role that Jordan plays in the Euro-Med Ministerial Process. This phase acknowledges positive developments regarding women's rights during the last decade through amendment and introduction of legislation, linked with the strengthening of women's rights organizations and their activism as well as cooperation at the international level.

Still, a lot remains to be done. One of the main obstacles hindering women's rights achievements are perceived to be culture and traditions, through which women's rights are consistently challenged by conservative cultural norms that affect women's freedom and autonomy.

The second predominant obstacle is the regional context. The ongoing conflicts in Syria and Iraq, the occupation of Palestine, and the rise of religious fundamentalisms following the 2011 uprisings all negatively impact the country's social and political spheres.

The quantitative phase of auto-administrated questionnaires (484 questionnaires) shows that the Ministerial Process is widely unknown. Its limited spread is mainly via media and other outlets. The Conclusions should be approached as a point of policy reference that could have a lasting impact

on women's rights. For this purpose, a body should be created to monitor and follow up on implementation by the signatory countries.

Major obstacles standing in the way of the implementation of the Ministerial Conclusions are similar to those that are hampering achievements in the field of women's rights. Namely, the regional context, the promotion of security as a first priority issue, the raising of a conservative discourse opposing gender equality and women's rights, the issue of refugees, and the inherent difficulties of women's rights activism. This part of the study expresses the request that the government fulfils its obligations regarding human and women's rights. It also underlines both the role of Jordan in the Euro-Med Process and the need for more action.

The role of education is perceived as crucial for development of the individual, society, and the country. Projects and initiatives that seek to improve women's education should take into account the many factors that prevent gender equality.

The stereotyped gender representation of women in the media propagates and normalizes harmful standards. Furthermore, legal framework discriminates on a gender basis, when it should instead provide women with equal rights and freedom, including presence and movement in the public space, and full citizenship.

It is widely perceived that discrimination could be justified by circumstances. This result indicates a high level of social tolerance towards discrimination against women. It underlines both the weight of traditions and the importance of education and awareness raising.

The opinion about the Ministerial Conclusions is widely positive and the dominant perception is that the Jordanian government is well on the way of demonstrating that women's rights should be a matter of higher political priority, but the pace is somewhat slow. They also believe that Jordan can and must keep its leading role in the Euro-Med Ministerial Process.

The conclusions of the study can be summarized as follows:

- Gender sensitive education and awareness raising for women and men are crucial to counteract the negative impact of culture and traditions on women's rights.
- Annulment and amendments of discriminative laws must be made.
- Mainstreaming gender equality on a ministerial level should be done by the creation of an operational mechanism.
- Governmental measures supporting meaningful participation and role of women in all spheres of public life should become a priority.
- Promotion of women's leadership is a necessity to support women's access to decision-making spheres.
- Dialogue between decision-makers, opinion leaders and women's rights organizations is key to developing a society where women and men are of equal worth.
- Raising awareness of the Ministerial Conclusions is a major asset for women's rights not only in Jordan but also in the whole region.
- Jordan can and should strengthen its leading role in the Euro-Med Ministerial Process.

INTRODUCTION

1. Background

The uprisings in the Arab world in the name of social change have created space for reforms and progression towards democracy and social justice, towards Civil States and new Constitutions that guarantee civil and political freedoms and rights for all. They ignited a dialogue between NGOs and new evolving institutions. However, there is still a long path ahead towards acknowledgement of women's rights and gender equality as priorities in these processes.

Even though the political landscape is constantly evolving and the on-going events seem to heighten the possibilities for women to participate in public life and politics, the social order and values governed by a patriarchal system, remain largely unchallenged. Growing religious fundamentalisms and political conservative trends inhibit women from enjoying full and equal citizenship rights. In the Southern Mediterranean countries, gender related concerns are shaped by the juridical, political or social interpretation of the dominant religious paradigms, and discriminatory practices against women have persisted. Furthermore, gender equality is hampered by the weight of culture and traditions. In Europe there is an enormous gap between formal equality and substantive equality. The widespread magnitude of violence against women remains high and there is still a long road ahead to reach equality.

In this context, the Euro-Med Ministerial Process on "Strengthening the Role of Women in Society" is a major tool for promoting and supporting women's rights and gender equality during the on-going changes in the whole region. The process, also known as Istanbul - Marrakesh process, started with the first Ministerial Conference that took place in 2006 in Istanbul, adopting the Istanbul Common Framework of Action 2006-2011. The second Ministerial Conference was held in 2009 in Marrakesh and reaffirmed the Ministers' commitments to this process and to gender equality.

The third Ministerial Conference took place on 12th September 2013 in Paris under the Co-Presidency of Catherine Ashton, European Union High Representative and Vice-President of the European Commission, Reem Abu Hassan, Minister of Social Development of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Najat Vallaud-Belkacem, Minister of Women's Rights and Government spokesperson of Republic of France in her capacity of host country.

The Paris Ministerial Conference reaffirmed the importance of this process, especially in the context of the on-going political transformations in the Southern Mediterranean, recognizing the important role women play in them. The Ministers condemned all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls, including during armed conflicts, occupation and post-conflict situations, and recognized that women “represent a major force for change and development in all sectors of the society”. They reaffirmed the obligations and commitments to the international women’s rights instruments to which their States are parties, including CEDAW and its optional protocol, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). They reconfirmed their commitment to promote, “de jure and de facto, equality between women and men in their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights”; (Cf Annex 1)

Jordan plays a crucial role in this process. The Paris Ministerial Conference was held under the Co-Presidency of Jordan. Prior to the Ministerial Conference, around 400 representatives from civil society, various ministries, media and academia, members of Parliament, and Senators had participated in a dialogue pertaining to the Ministerial Conclusions. The panel discussion co-organized by the European Feminist Initiative IFE-EFI with the cooperation of the Ministry of Social Development in October 2014 highlighted the importance of taking concrete steps for implementing the Ministerial Conclusions. The panellists and participants agreed that the time is right to develop a working methodology that will enable effective changes in favour of women’s rights.

This led Euromed Feminist Initiative IFE–EFI to undertake a project titled “Improving Gender Equality and Democratic Governance in Jordan” under the program of the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs MOPPA “Support to Democratic Governance in Jordan” funded by the EU, with the aim of raising awareness of the Ministerial Conclusions 2013 as a major gender equality policy document on national level and to favour its appropriation by civil society. This goal is linked to the conviction that the whole process and the Paris Ministerial Conclusions are among the major tools for development of national gender equality policies.

The first part of this project is a study striving to provide better knowledge of the perception, role, and impact of the Ministerial Conclusions in Jordan's social, economic and political life and to highlight the main aspects of the changes and developments that have taken place in the context of this process.

2. Objectives

The study's overall objective is to help uncover the interconnection between gender equality and democracy-building and to favour a gender equality friendly environment.

It strives to increase social awareness and knowledge of the impact and role of Euro-Med Ministerial Conclusions 2013 on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society.

The study also seeks to provide an up-to-date overview of the current status of women's rights in Jordan, covering social, economic and political spheres as well as to identify limitations and constraints to be addressed in the context of the upcoming 4th Ministerial Conference planned for 2016. The study aims to elaborate policy recommendations to address these constraints and to improve this situation.

3. Method

The study has been developed in three phases: a desk study, a qualitative phase of in-depth interviews as well as focus group discussion and a quantitative phase of questionnaires.

➤ **Initial phase: a desk study**

Following the Ministerial Conclusions, this phase aimed at providing an overview of the current status of women's civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights in Jordan, as well as limitations and constraints for their full achievement.

➤ **Second phase: a qualitative phase of in-depth interviews and a focus group discussion**

The qualitative phase involved conducting in-depth interviews with 36 representatives of the social, political, academic, and media sectors concerned by the Ministerial Process. (Cf Annex 2) They contributed their knowledge and expertise from the social and political field.

In addition, one focus group discussion was organized with 14 leaders of grassroots women's organizations from 11 governorates in Jordan. The interest of this phase is in the diversity of voices of the interviewed, their insights, and the various perspectives they bring on the issue.

➤ **Third phase: a quantitative phase of auto-administrated questionnaires**

The questionnaires were directed to a broader sample of people who contributed their experience as social actors. Questionnaires were distributed to members and volunteers of grass root organizations in all the 12 governorates. Altogether 484 questionnaires have been collected. The set of questions was focused on the perception of the situation of women's rights and gender equality in Jordan, the level of social tolerance regarding discrimination against women, the knowledge and perception of Ministerial Conclusions, and the priorities to be addressed. (Cf Annex 3) Anonymity was guaranteed and respected throughout the distribution and collection method.

PART A: DESK STUDY

1. CURRENT STATUS OF WOMEN AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Jordan, a country with limited natural resources, has devoted much effort to developing its human resources. "People are our most precious asset," a famous statement by the late King Hussein, has been Jordan's motto for decades. For the purpose of achieving sustainable economic growth, the country introduced policies, programs, and plans with the ultimate aim of societal development. By working to ensure improvements in the quality of life for its citizens, Jordan experienced tangible progress across the board in the education, health, and housing sectors, among others. The positive impact of such policies has for example been reflected in the increasing literacy rate, a task undertaken by the Ministry of Education, in part through improving curricula. It has also been manifested through the development of low-cost housing for the poor, a make-shift attempt at decreasing poverty level. These achievements have paved the way for further improvements in other aspects of Jordanian life.

While the status of Jordanian women has improved considerably in regards to education, health, and life expectancy, advances in these spheres have yet to fully bridge the gender gap. Constraints persist in areas such as representation and participation in the political sphere, employment and visible advances in the labour force, and equities in the social domain. Gender disparity in Jordan has particularly increased during the recent years with the spread of conservatism and nationalism, which has caused regressive backlash against women's rights and gender equity. In general, words like "equity" and "equality" are negatively perceived and hold derogatory denotations. This has been one of the challenges of implementing gender-specific international agreements whose intention is to guarantee continuous advancement in women's rights. Although Jordan has been a signatory to many of these agreements, it has failed to implement them effectively and sustainably with the aim of boosting the rights of women enshrined in the said agreements.

- **Legal Framework**

The current inequalities endured by Jordanian women are due in part to a discriminatory legal framework that directly contradicts the main goal of women's equality in society. The French civil code, the Islamic Shari'a law, and tribal traditions are among the many factors that influence the Jordanian legal system and the laws and policies in place.¹

Jordanian courts are divided into three distinct categories: civil, religious, and special courts, each exercising its jurisdiction in separate matters. According to Article 102 of the Jordanian Constitution, the jurisdiction of civil courts covers "all persons in all matters, civil and criminal, including cases brought by or against the government." Personal-status laws regarding family, divorce, child custody and inheritance fall under the jurisdiction of religious courts. Special courts cover tribunals that fall outside both the civil and religious courts. For instance, the State Security courts deal with issues that concern drug trafficking, cases of national security, treason, terrorism, counterfeit money, spying, and illegal smuggling.²

- **Inheritance rights**

Inheritance, a key part of the Personal Status laws, is influenced by the principles of Islamic Sharia which is applicable to Muslims and non-Muslim alike.³ While the Islamic law follows a complex procedure to ensure a woman's right to inheritance, many inequalities persist. A woman's share of inheritance depends upon multiple factors such as status, religion and relation to the deceased.⁴ Generally, a woman's share is one half of the male heir's

¹United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF),. 2011. *Jordan MENA Gender Equality Profile Status Of Girls And Women In The Middle East And Africa*. 1

²"The Judiciary," *Jordan Investment Board*, Accessed July 23, 2015, <<http://www.jib.jo/BusinessandInvestment/InvestorProtectionDisputeSettlement/TheJudiciary/tabid/156/language/en-US/Default.aspx#555>>

³UNICEF, 2011, 2.

⁴In regards to religion and inheritance Non-Muslim women married to Muslim men do not inherit. This is also applied to descendants that differ in religion from the deceased.

share, though there are some instances where a woman may receive an equal amount or more.⁵ This inequality is attributed to fiscal considerations and gender roles in society, with the male (not the female) being seen as the breadwinner and the provider for the family.⁶

In some areas of Jordan, women still face societal pressure to relinquish their shares, regardless of how they compare to the male relative's shares. Lack of understanding concerning their inheritance rights and legal procedures as well as fear of abandonment, abuse and compliance with social customs are all reasons why women refrain from demanding their full inheritance rights.⁷

Reforms to inheritance laws and logistics have been introduced to prevent coercion and better protect women's inheritance rights. A waiting period has been put into place that prevents heirs from relinquishing their shares unthinkingly, allowing women a proper mourning period during which they would be less susceptible to manipulation and persuasion.⁸

- **Guardianship and Custody rights**

Guardianship and Custody differ in Islamic law by both definition and implications. Guardianship or '*Wiliyat*' refers to authority of the protection and care over another person, whereas custody or '*Hidhanat*' is used to denote the upbringing or raising of the child. Legal cases regarding guardianship and custody of children are settled in religious courts composed of clergymen. Typically, custody of children is allocated to the mother, but under certain restrictions. Sources of Islamic jurisprudence differ in their opinion of maternal custody. For instance, according to the Hanafi school of

⁵*Women's Rights To Inheritance: Realities And Proposed Policies*. 2012. Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW), Jordan Hashemite Fund for Human Development (JOHUD), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

<http://johud.org.jo/SystemFiles/SSfile_635143893539732903.pdf>, 12-16. (Will be further referred to as JNCW, JOHUD, UNFPA)

⁶Freedom House,. 2010. *Jordan*. Women's Rights In The Middle East And North Africa. <https://www.freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/inline_images/Jordan.pdf>, 15.

⁷JNCW, JOHUD, UNFPA, 2012, 26-28.

⁸PREMDMENA, 2013, 15.

jurisprudence, the mother's custody extends until her son reaches the age of seven and her daughter the age of nine.⁹ Mothers, however, relinquish custody of children in cases of her remarriage or inability to properly care for the children.¹⁰

Guardianship of children remains a prerogative for fathers, as the father is seen by courts as the financial provider. Any major decision to be made that relates to the children is a right that belongs to the father, regardless of custody. In cases of widowhood, the guardianship is granted to the paternal uncles and grandfather of the children, who are entitled to make important decisions regarding inheritance and other factors that directly affect females under their guardianship.¹¹

- **Nationality rights**

Discriminatory nationality law currently in place negatively affects Jordanian women by preventing them from passing on their nationality to their children. Jordanian women married to non-Jordanian men are unable to pass their citizenship to their spouses and children. This restriction does not apply to Jordanian men who marry non-Jordanian women, whose children automatically receive a Jordanian citizenship.

Children of Jordanian women who marry "foreign" men are prevented from rights that accompany citizenship. These "stateless" family members are denied free public education and encounter difficulty when searching for employment. Residence permits must also be obtained in order for them to continue living in Jordan.¹² Some nationalities, like Egyptians, are exempted from residency permits based on bilateral agreements, but in all other cases,

⁹The Malaki school of thought extends the custody of the mother until the daughter reaches marriageable age.

¹⁰Rafiq, Ayesha. 2014. 'Child Custody In Classical Islamic Law And Laws Of Contemporary Muslim World (An Analysis)'. *International Journal Of Humanities And Social Science* 4 (5), 268-270

¹¹Jwu.org.jo,. 2010. - Jordanian Women's Union - Family Law'. <<http://jwu.org.jo/PagesDetiles.aspx?lng=1&pageid=18>>

¹²Freedom House, 2010, 4.

foreign nationals need a work permit to be able to work in Jordan or they will be subject to deportation.

Exceptionally and according to the nationality law, any person born in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan of a mother holding Jordanian nationality and of a father of unknown nationality or of a Stateless father or whose filiation is not established is considered Jordanian.

Although Jordan has signed and ratified the CEDAW treaty, many reservations are still in place. One such reservation pertains to the articles dealing with nationality rights in Jordan. Recommendations by the CEDAW committee have done little to improve the status of women in regards to nationality.¹³ Activist campaigns in Jordan, such as "My Mother is a Jordanian and Her Nationality Is a Right for Me," advocate for a more equal nationality right, one that allows a Jordanian mother to pass on her nationality to her children¹⁴.

- **Divorce rights**

Divorce is considered part of the Personal Status laws that work in part with the Jordanian legal framework, but it must be performed in accordance with the proper religious laws. Christian women in Jordan that seek divorce usually encounter difficulty, as divorce under Roman Catholic churches is technically forbidden, and may be achieved only under specific circumstances.¹⁵

¹³Naffa, L., F. Al Dabbas, and N. Al Emam. "Shadow NGO report to CEDAW committee Jordan: Evaluation of national policy, measures and actual facts on violence against women." (2007).

¹⁴Aljazeera.com,. 2015. 'Jordanian Progeny Gain Ground In Nationality Fight'. <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/05/jordanian-progeny-gain-ground-nationality-fight-150504100629097.html>.

¹⁵National Council for Foreign Affairs,. 2014. *Christian Marriage Guide*. <http://ncfa.org.jo:85/ncfa/sites/default/files/publications/christian-marriage-guide.pdf>.

In Muslim tradition and Islamic courts, men can initiate divorce without justification. Until just recently women were denied the same right. Previously, in order to seek a divorce, the wife had to receive prior permission from her husband. In cases of domestic abuse, women could apply to a court for divorce, but had to provide evidence of the abuse as well as two testifying witnesses.

In 2001, a temporary law, personal status law No. 36/2010 went into effect that granted women the ability to initiate the divorce process, but in return they were expected to relinquish all rights to alimony and return the dowry received from the husband.¹⁶ Although considered an improvement, this temporary law excluded women from poorer backgrounds lacking financial stability to accept such conditions.

2. DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE

- **Political Participation**

Political participation of women in Jordan has increased over the years but is still far from being on a gender-equal level. Women are underrepresented in both legislative bodies and court systems. Though women received the right to vote in 1974, few exercise their right to participate in politics.

Extra measures have been put into place to ensure an increase in women's participation in the government. The quota system, first introduced in 2003, allocated six out of one-hundred and ten parliament seats for women. The six women were chosen on the basis of having the highest percentage of votes cast. This does not include any seats won by women who have been elected directly. By 2010, the number of reserved seats had doubled, enough to elect one representative from each of the twelve governorates. Once again the quota was increased to fifteen seats during the 2013 elections. However, the total number of the parliamentary seats was also increased to 150. Participation of Jordanian women in the political sphere is barely meeting the minimum

¹⁶Freedom House, 2010, 10.

requirements. Usually only one or two seats above the mandated quota are won in a direct election by a Jordanian woman.¹⁷

In 1996, Jordan saw its first female judge, and by 2011, 12% of the judges in Jordan were female. However, currently no female holds a judicial position in a Jordanian Sharia court.¹⁸ This clearly works against the efforts of activists to improve the personal status laws, which are mandated by a male clergy who inevitably cannot be gender neutral. Some of the obstacles Jordanian women face in terms of political participation are due to patriarchal traditions and social norms.¹⁹

- **Gender-Based Violence**

The many gaps that persist in Jordanian legislation and policies leave the country inadequately prepared to properly combat gender-based violence. Existing research on the violence faced by Jordanian women is limited, though recently the number of studies have steadily increased. Nevertheless, the few studies produced so far have provided a general view of the prevalence of gender-based violence in Jordan and the various forms it takes.²⁰ A combination of multiple factors such as cultural habits, stereotypes, social norms, personal status laws, as well as the absence of any deterrent laws leave Jordanian women vulnerable to gender-based violence.²¹

Domestic violence in Jordan is a widely-prevailing form of gender-based violence, and studies show women are more likely to be abused than male family members. Physical, mental, emotional, verbal, social, and economic abuse are all diverse forms of domestic violence that can be inflicted upon

¹⁷Quotaproject.org,. 2015. 'Jordan | Quotaproject: Global Database Of Quotas For Women'. <http://www.quotaproject.org/uid/countryview.cfm?country=113>.

¹⁸PREMDMENA, 2013, 74.

¹⁹Ibid., 83,

²⁰ United Nations in Jordan,. 2008. *Violence Against Women: Assessing The Situation In Jordan*.

http://www.un.org/womenwatch/ianwge/taskforces/vaw/VAW_Jordan_baseline_assessment_final.pdf.9

²¹ Naffa, Al Dabbas, Al Emam, 2007, 3.

women.²² According to a study that surveyed married women in 2007, current and former husbands were the most common perpetrators of abuse (64%). In that same survey, almost 32% of women experienced some form of abuse by the age of 15, and the majority (90%) accepted some sort of justification for such abuse.²³

Following the recommendations from the CEDAW committee, Jordan issued the Domestic Violence Law in 2008. This legislation enacted by the government, though representing a step in the right direction, does little to assist female victims. The law does not provide a comprehensible definition for domestic violence or violence against women. Instead, victims must rely on the judge to determine what constitutes domestic violence. Another shortcoming of this law is that it does not provide procedures that can be used to criminalize the abusers.²⁴

Victims of domestic abuse in Jordan have very few options due to the inadequate legislation in place. Battered women seeking protection are detained in correctional centres as a means of police protection. The Family Reconciliation House, intended as a shelter for women subjected to violence, in effect treats victims as criminals. In order to be housed in this shelter, women must first report the crime to the Family Protection Department.²⁵ Inadequate training of both the staff and police who handle such reports leave traumatized victims at a risk.²⁶ In regards to women that wish to avoid prosecuting their abusers, little or no protection is provided.

²² United Nations in Jordan, 2008, 10.

²³ USAID, 2012. *USAID Jordan: Gender Analysis And Assessment*. <<http://inform.gov.jo/Portals/0/Report%20PDFs/8.%20Civil%20Society%20Enabling%200&%20Protection/i.%20Social%20Policy/2012%20Mar-USAID-Gender%20Analysis%20and%20Assessment.pdf>>, 5.

²⁴ Jordanian Women's Union, 2012, 8.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 8-9.

²⁶ Azzeh, Laila. 2014. 'Parliamentarians Call For Criminalising Domestic Violence | Jordan Times'. *Jordantimes.Com*.

<<http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/parliamentarians-call-criminalising-domestic-violence>>

Amendments to Article 29/6 in the penal code has made sexual harassment between an employer and employee punishable under the law. However, the limitations of such an amendment do not fully address sexual assault that may occur in the workplace between employees, leaving employed women vulnerable.²⁷

Women and girls suspected of having sexual relations outside of marriage, or victims of rape, are at risk of becoming victims of honour crimes. In order to avoid the social stigma that is attached to reporting sexual violence, a female may be subjected to injury or murder at the hands of a male relative to preserve family honour.²⁸ Penal codes articles 98 and 340 benefit perpetrators of honour crimes by reducing the prison sentence.²⁹

- **Economic Participation**

Although Jordan has seen significant improvements in its health and education sectors, the participation of Jordanian women in the labour market is severely lacking. In fact, the wide gender imbalance in Jordan's economic participation has lowered Jordan's ranking in the Gender Gap Index, placing it 134th out of 142 countries.³⁰ In 2014, the percentage of women in the labour force was 12.4%, a decrease of 1.9% from 2013.

Women's lack of advancement in the economic sector is due to multiple social and legal barriers. Traditional gender roles and social norms are still emphasized within society and women are expected to only apply to "socially acceptable" jobs. Gendered stereotypes limit the employment opportunities available to women, pushing them into public sector jobs such as health, education and public administration.³¹ As such, the gender gap is the lowest in the public sector, reaching a 10% gap. Better working conditions, hours and

²⁷ Jordanian Women's Union, 2012, 30-31.

²⁸ USAID, 2012, 5.

²⁹ Freedom House, 2010, 7.

³⁰ {Improving Jordan's Gender Ranking, 2015 (PowerPoint)}

³¹ USAID, 2012, 2-3.

benefits are all elements that determine the predominance of women in the public sector.

As for the private sector, women are poorly represented with only 13% being female employees. These statistics can be attributed to a number of reasons such as poor and women-unfriendly public transportation, and discriminatory working environments. Women tend to experience gender discrimination at a much higher level in the private sector. Employer preference leans more towards males as they are perceived to be more productive, more capable and work longer hours. Male dominated families' appropriation of women's salaries is a factor discouraging women from work in some areas in Jordan.

Gender disparities continue to exist spanning both the public and the private sector. Although the ratified International Labor Organization's (ILO) Equal Remuneration Convention and Section 23 (ii) (a) of the Jordanian Constitution both ensure equal pay for all workers, women continue to experience a substantial wage gap. In addition, the unemployment rate of younger females ranging from the ages of 15 to 24 can reach up to 46%, and females (25-39) reach to 51.6% including those who are university graduates. Regarding their economic activity, the overwhelming percentage of females aged 15 and older are engaged in education (at 41.7%), followed by Human Health/Social Work (14.6%) and Public Administration/Defense (14.1%), respectively.

3. SOCIAL AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

- **Health**

Jordan's continued interest in the health sector has brought considerable progress in the past years. Improvements in the mortality rates among women and children, and increases in the life expectancy rates³² have enabled Jordan to achieve its millennium development goals.³³

³²Has increased to 74 for women and 72 for men.

³³United Nations in Jordan, 2008, 7.

The use of birth-control methods among Jordanian women is limited although the number of users is on the rise. Misconceptions and a lack of knowledge prevent women from using more effective contraceptive methods.³⁴ Typically, pregnancy decisions are left as a final decision to the husband.³⁵ Family planning centres should increase efforts in raising awareness and providing women with a better understanding of their role in this domain.

Studies of the health sector in Jordan generally exclude women with disabilities. These studies do not sufficiently address the types of disabilities women may have, nor do they provide effective treatments or special care. Typically, hospitals and health care facilities are not sufficiently equipped for such cases. Special care and treatments are difficult to follow up with, due to the lack of trained professionals and specialized facilities.

One major concern that needs to be addressed is the sterilization of disabled women. Families that experience difficulties with disabled female family members, or wish to prevent the rape related pregnancies, will seek centres that perform hysterectomies. Training centres that provide specialists to teach disabled women positive hygiene practices are costly and unaffordable for most.

- **Education**

Jordan's education sector has seen significant improvement. Appropriate measures have been implemented to lower the illiteracy rate among women and to increase school enrolment. According to a study conducted by the Department of Statistics in 2010, the percentage of enrolled students had reached 91%.³⁶ Women make up a higher proportion of enrolled students in

³⁴Injectables and intrauterine devices/IUD compared to more common methods (e.g. condoms, birth control pills)

³⁵USAID, 2012, 9.

³⁶*Ibid.*, 25.

secondary and higher education.³⁷ In 2014, the percentage of enrolled female students was 81.8% compared to 73.1 of enrolled male students.

Although the percentage of women enrolled in higher education is improving, the fields women are encouraged to study largely fit the stereotypical image of women's "appropriate" education. 57% of women graduate from the humanities and social sciences while only 29.7% are enrolled in engineering compared to men.³⁸

The gender gap is especially prominent in vocational training throughout the region. 98.4% of men participate in the vocational training provided, while in comparison, only 1.6% of females participate. Women are not encouraged to join and receive specialized education due to the nature of the work involved and the gendered stereotypes that plague the sector. These training programs in technical skills are created as male-specific due to the physical strength and skills required.³⁹

³⁷USAID, 2012, 1. - Higher Education: A 50.9% for females compared to a 49.1% enrollment rate for males.

³⁸Jordanian Women's Union, 2012, 26.

³⁹Ibid., 25-26.

PART B: QUALITATIVE PHASE ANALYSIS OF THE IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

The qualitative phase gathered the opinions of major actors in social and political life regarding the Ministerial Conclusions and the role that Jordan plays in the Euro-Med Ministerial Process. Fifty persons representing a wide spectrum of the opinion leaders were approached for this phase of the study. Thirty-six women and men were selected and interviewed as major actors, representing Jordanian political and social life. The Ambassador of Republic of France and the EU Ambassador to Jordan were interviewed as the 3rd Euro-Med Ministerial Conference was held under the Co-Presidency of the EU and France. Each interview lasted between one hour to one hour and a half. The interviewees included:

- Ministers and representatives from ministries
- Senators and Members of Parliament
- Heads of Institutions
- Ambassadors
- Political leaders at the national and local level and heads of political parties
- Leaders and members of human rights and women's rights organizations and academics

All the interviewed have agreed to have their names mentioned as contributors to this study.

In addition, one focus group discussion was organized with 14 leaders of grassroots women's organizations from 11 governorates in Jordan. One governorate could not participate.

The set of questions for the interviews as well as for the focus group was structured around the following issues:

- Most recent changes in women's rights in Jordan;

- The region's political and social impact on women's rights in the country;
- The knowledge and viability of the 3rd Euro-Med Ministerial Conference as a tool for policy making in the areas of gender equality and empowerment of women;
- The Ministerial Conference's potential and real impact on women's rights;
- Major obstacles standing in the way of full implementation;
- Policies needed to encourage the government to fulfil its obligations regarding human and women's rights;
- Jordan's role in the Euro-Med process on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society;
- Ministerial Conclusions that need to be addressed in priority and the reasons why.

1. WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN JORDAN

A. Positive development during the last decade

The majority of the interviewees – two thirds of them - believe that there have been significant changes in the empowerment of women and their rights.

Despite the current existing threats and challenges regarding the status quo of women, there has been, undeniably, a paradigm shift in this status, placing women in a noticeably better position than that of their grandmothers and mothers.

The majority of the interviewees – two thirds of them - believe that there have been significant changes in the empowerment of women and their rights. This has been achieved through amendments and the enhancement of legislation that granted women more rights. The positive development is linked with strengthening of women's rights organizations and their activism. Furthermore, international aid and cooperation are seen as other contributing factors that brought about a paradigm shift in human rights.

Women activists and NGOs have been working very hard and steadily to bring about the necessary changes in the status quo of women.

B. However, a lot remains to be done

Intensified efforts are needed to put pressure on the government to be more committed as a signatory to international human-rights agreements and dedicated to operational implementation of international agreements on women's rights.

If governments are not held accountable for not meeting commitments in the advancement of women's rights, a change in women's status quo will be unattainable.

The gap between formal agreements and their implementation is considered a consequence not only of lacking political will, but also insufficient pressure and involvement from the women's rights movement itself, demanding follow-up mechanisms.

The problem with international agreements is that the signatories think the signing protocol or the conference is an end in itself rather than a means to an end.

We are going through a phase of stalemate in women's rights partly because the international community cares most about finding revenues to spend on projects and the signatories focus most on being eligible for the aid. What is missing are follow-up mechanisms.

C. Obstacles to women's rights achievements

- The weight of culture and traditions as obstacle

Jordan and many Arab countries were very liberal and progressive in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. Conservatism is a new import and trend.

Partnership with international communities which intervene in the domestic and internal affairs of our women's is a form of villainy.

The status of women is affected in Jordan and many Arab countries from both conservatism and nationalism being woven into the social fabric. Attempts to mainstream gender equality have been strongly challenged by conservatives

as a paradigm alien to the Islamic culture and thus, naturally labelled anti-national and even colonialist.

Arab women, who, for the sake of their own empowerment, are allying themselves with the international community at the expense of the Palestinian cause, are in effect de-politicizing and de-emphasizing the Israeli occupation and succumbing to Western imperialist schemes.

- The political and social impact of the regional context

The current political unrest and turbulence in our part of the world has drastically affected women-empowerment policies, putting them in the backseat.

A great majority of the interviewed consider that a cause-and-effect relationship exists between the regional context and the political and social situation in the country. At this point in time, they believe that Arab societies are deeply influenced by conservative and nationalistic sentiments, both of which at best may become hindrances to advancing women's issues, and at worst may cause detrimental backlash against the women's rights movement.

- Regional conflicts and national security

It is decadent and effete to call for women's rights in the current political unrest.

Security issues and the refugee migration crisis are crucial complications to mention when considering the protracted process of gender equality in the region. Addressing the growing regional challenges and finding a comprehensive solution to recent crises, have become top priorities often enough that women's issues are frequently relegated to the backburner.

Endeavouring to be a secure and stable force in this part of the world, Jordan exerts immense effort to shoulder responsibility and help alleviate much of the tension and turbulence in surrounding countries. Jordan provides asylum to an enormous number of refugees, recently ranking 3rd for having the largest refugee community globally when compared to its population.

Jordan has succeeded in embracing all refugees that sought asylum and has won world respect on how it has opened its borders, heart and mind to asylum seekers.

The high level of militarization and influx of refugees in an area rich with conflict, is thought by many, to compound the region's destabilization. Furthermore, with national security being the countries' primary focus, other urgent issues that need to be addressed, such as women's issues, are often side-lined and disregarded.

Investing in human resources becomes peripheral when the country is compelled to invest in militarization so as to face its political challenges and security threats.

In the opinion of a majority of interviewees, diligent work to counter these challenges and threats is both a national and regional responsibility.

- Rise of religious fundamentalisms

The power of conservative religious voices, which has increased significantly following the downfall of authoritarian regimes during the Arab spring, is one of several forces at work side-lining women's issues.

Traditions, habits, culture, the instrumental use of religion and the social situation are obstacles for women's empowerment.

In addition, conservative interpretations of Quranic verses that have been embedded into national policies prevent women from attaining gender equality in social, political, and economic spheres.

Following the 2011 uprisings, the Arab region has witnessed a resurgence of ideological Islamist movements with strong religious agendas, leading to their increased success in parliamentary elections. Undoubtedly, this puts them in a position to exercise noticeable control over decisions pertaining to a host of issues in the post-revolutionary era, including women's issues.

In addition to the hindrances found in the political framework itself, women's rights are often confronted by conservative cultural norms that affect women's freedom and autonomy.

How can a society develop self-respect if it fails to respect the autonomy of its women?

The image of an "ideal or good" woman and society, constructed by Islamist and secularist thought alike, continually imprisons women in a space permeated by prevalent gender roles and the presence of women in the decision-making spheres remains limited.

The promotion on women as deciders is always a matter of balance of power.

- The lack of political will

According to some interviewees, women's rights do not have the status of a high-level political issue or priority. They define the present situation as a phase of regression, due to the combination of cultural obstacles, regional context and lack of political will.

The Government takes the pretext of security issues not to address all these questions, we are regressing. 4 or 5 years ago we were on the right road, after the Arab spring we regressed.

The refusal to include gender equality in the constitution or to allow Jordanian women married to non-Jordanians to pass their nationality to their children, illustrate this situation:

Why are we talking about the "value of the Jordanian nationality", (referring to subjects) when the issue is about rights (referring to citizens)?

D. The efforts to overcome the conservative trends

Despite the numerous obstacles to progress in the field of women's rights, continued efforts have been made to appropriate the requirements for gender equality within the conservative cultural fabric of Jordanian society, in order to

create a legitimate space where negotiation of necessary women's rights and needs is attainable.

We are proud to be the first Arab country which voted laws against domestic violence, but a lot must be done for their full implementation.

The mobilization of the women's movement is bringing about some major developments, such as ratification of CEDAW, the Convention Against Torture (CAT), increasing of women's quotas for the elections at the municipality level, a certain level of dialogue on gender equality with civil society, as well as the efforts and role of Jordan in the Ministerial process. This has led the vast majority of interviewees to believe that the Islamist/conservative trend has only recently emerged and is not likely to stay long. Therefore, its position should not be a guiding principle of permanent significance.

There will be a backlash to conservatism and conservatism will dilute, because conservatism in our region is not indigenous.

2. THE EURO-MED MINISTERIAL PROCESS: KNOWLEDGE, ROLE AND IMPACT

A. The Ministerial Process as a point of policy reference

The Euro-Med Conference can have no impact if it does not create the critical mass from within the Arab world that can adapt it and fight for its implementation.

Less than one third of interviewees know about the Euro-Med Ministerial Process and the conclusions of the Paris Conference. Of the minority that is familiar with these two, either they are involved in a related local coalition or they have heard about it in national conferences, seminars or focus groups. The majority of the interviewees believe there has not been enough public exposure to the Conference in media or government statements.

The Euro-Med Ministerial Conference findings should be shared and disseminated to the people through distinct outreach policies and tactics so as

to get them engaged in the findings and to allow the local people to have their say and give their feedback on the matter.

The Euro-Med Ministerial Process could be approached as a policy reference with more efforts to disseminate knowledge in society via media and other outlets. The majority believe that if the call for strengthening the role of women becomes a political issue, the message could be stronger, more easily adapted by the government, and naturally legislated.

One way to make the Euro-Med Conference Conclusions relevant to people in Jordan and the region is when you allow the ones directly involved and the stakeholders to have full ownership of the findings/conclusions.

B. The Euro-Med Ministerial Conference potential and real impact on women's rights

- The need of a monitoring process

The majority of interviewees agree that the role of the Ministerial Conference in strengthening the position of women in society would be pivotal if a body, unit, or agency is created, that monitors and evaluates compliances with the Ministerial Conference conclusions and recommendations for action. Such a body would be comprised of experts from the Euro-Med region whose main responsibility would be to follow up on implementation by the signatory countries.

Follow-up mechanisms and tactics encourage signatories to be more committed to women's rights by making the monitoring of commitment and implementation of agreements possible.

The absence of such a body was one of the two main challenges mentioned regarding the implementation of the Ministerial Conclusions. Without a monitoring mechanism to supervise the operational implementation of gender-specific international agreements, we are left with both a weakness of political commitment and an incongruity between national legislation and international protocol. Accountability and evaluation, two key aspects of any

successful policy implementation, do not exist either, thus the agreement becomes nothing more than empty words.

There are some requests for a national, regional and international coalition to follow up on the effective operational implementation of the Conclusions, together with other regional and national women's rights instruments, linking them to the acquired financial aid from the signatory partners.

- The need of international cooperation

In the absence of viable compatibility of partnership between Jordan and its international partners, international agreements are mono-sided and an expression of hegemony.

Secure compatibility between national and international partnerships would help facilitate viable agreements and effective implementation. The paradoxical role of the international community in the Arab world, especially in light of its position regarding Israeli occupation, has lessened the credibility of international donors and partners.

We will work with the international community to bring about equity and equality in our societies only if they learn how to hold Israel accountable of its bad actions and its colonialism.

Therefore trust-building should be one of the most pressing priorities in sustaining good relationships with the international community.

Ethically responsible actions by the international community would help bridge gaps and build trust with the Arab community. Arabs generally feel both victimized and hurt because they are being a) subjected to constant stereotypical discrimination and terror-image projection and b) disappointed with the political stance of the international community vis-à-vis the Israeli occupation and apartheid.

C. Major obstacles standing in the way of full implementation of the Ministerial Conclusions

The obstacles described here are similar to those that are hampering achievements in the field of women's rights.

- The regional context and the promotion of security as a first priority issue

Institutionalization of 'national security' and 'conservatism' has hindered moving forward in women's rights because of the perception that women's rights discourse and agenda stem from a "Western" international agenda.

If women empowerment policies are national-security related, this can guarantee better opportunities for advancement in women's issues.

It would be a smart tactic to align women's empowerment discourse and narrative with national-security necessities.

- The raising of a conservative discourse opposing gender equality and women's rights as "Western values"

Women discourse of liberation needs to reinvent itself to be appropriated with the current domestic and national discourse.

To customize programs to fit in with local communities and the conservative mind-set, is not necessarily compromising over women's rights but trying to find new venues of empowering women through negotiation, acculturation and reconciliation between the global and the local.

The conservative discourse on women's rights presents them as a part of a "Western agenda" and calls gender equality a "Western value". The universality of women's rights is said to undermine national identity and is condemned on the ground of cultural specificity.

The State's avoidance of meeting the universal human and women rights obligations is rationalized and then justified through creating the myth of cultural specificity; it's such tactics that butcher our rights as women.

- The issue of refugees

The influx of Syrian refugees (as necessary as it is) has created many obstacles on the path towards women's empowerment and gender equality, the most severe challenge perceived to be the reallocation of financial resources.

Jordan has always met its moral obligation to help people in neighbouring countries, which are going through political unrest, to find refuge and safety in Jordan. This has been done, though, at a high cost.

The international aid had been split between Jordanians and their refugee guests.

In fact, Jordan is suffering from the shortage of funding for refugees from the international community. The latter's failure to meet its ethical obligation regarding funding puts Jordan in a tough position of trying to fill in the gap by providing some of the funding itself.

It is also believed that women's access to the labour market is influenced by the refugee crisis. Syrian women are seen as cheap labour, more skilful and more willing to deal with work environments that Jordanian women hesitate to enter, likely because their financial situations are quite dire. This might explain the decrease of Jordanian women's enrolment in the work force.

Additionally, the international funding that used to be allocated solely to issues of "women's domestic inequity" has been restructured to include matters related to Syrian women refugees. Moreover, there is now what some qualify as "a new type of commercialization of women" referring to the young Syrian refugee women who marry Jordanian men.

There is an emergence of new and strange behaviours in Jordanian society that results in new types of marriages having unusual legal status that are not in favour of women's protection.

- Inherent difficulties of women's rights activism

Women's activism in Jordan has evolved over the years to encompass various paths in a context very often hostile to women's rights. An agenda has been built either within the context of internationalization, relating to the paradigm of women's liberation and human rights, or –conversely – in opposition to “Western thought and agendas”, by resorting to traditionalist and nationalist “liberation”.

Women's activism in Jordan is torn between State feminism, which is Western in essence or un-traditionalist, and nationalist feminists or traditionalists who are conservative in essence.

Lack of independency of the women's movement is linked with the lack of proper means and financial autonomy to develop projects, actions and campaigns and to act freely for their cause.

Our Jordanian women activists are depleted and side-lined from their original course with too much intervention in their own agency: intervention from the state, from society, from political agendas and from the international granters of funding. We have lost our authentic voice.

Their agency has been contextualized to fit in either within national priorities or the international ones. Women advocates are lost by what is dictated on them, which erodes their authentic narrative.

Women's rights are always the most difficult to gain and the most difficult to preserve, whatever the context. Nothing is ever definitively achieved in this domain.

Our women activists have great potential to bring about change and the needed paradigm shift in the status quo of women. They have shown their potentiality and dedication over the long years of activism, but they are not left alone to grow and evolve steadily and sustain the momentum of their efforts. There are always distracted by many emerging variables which pull them back and build mountains of frustration for them.

Therefore, the role of women's rights organizations is perceived as indispensable, not only for women but also for the whole society.

If you allow women to develop their political and national identities autonomously, you guarantee fair societies.

It is important to underline that there is also acknowledgement of some positive developments in the movement, like the emergence of a women-activism trend, which employs home-grown dynamics and tactics. By organizing the community around issues of women's empowerment, the critical masses needed for full ownership of problem solving and opportunity seeking start to develop. Advocates believe that such tactics bring about the necessary change to women's status quo by mobilizing key stakeholders.

Women should be given ample space to think for themselves and to find their own voices.

D. Policies needed for the government to fulfil its obligations regarding human and women's rights

The vast majority of interviewees believe that gender equality should be mainstreamed through integration by the government of gender-mainstreaming policies in all the ministries and governmental organizations.

The right way to move forward with women empowerment is through institutionalizing and mainstreaming gender in all governmental organizations.

They also believe in the power of policies as a game changer. The State machinery is highly needed at this stage.

Calls for women empowerment and gender equality should be political.

A minority of interviewees believe that politicians and institutions have little to offer. They described the situation of women in the Arab world as an outcome of the paradoxical role played by the governments, being foremost

among the signatories on the one hand and one of the least implementers on the other.

Empowering women and their status is a political and existential necessity and not only an intellectual exercise.

E. Jordan's role in the Euro-Med Process

Jordan's trusted leadership and its policy towards the region place it in a position to set the tone for the region.

Unanimously, interviewees agreed that Jordan can play a leading role in the Euro-Med process by establishing itself as a model to other Arab countries who, like Jordan, ought to take pride in investing in human resources. Jordan has proved itself throughout the political turbulence, which the region has endured since the advent of the Arab Spring in 2011, as sober and wise in managing risks and challenges.

Jordan has earned its credibility and high reliability in the region and the world through its moderate, enlightened and humane position towards a wide range of matters and issues in the region and the world.

Having said that, many of the interviewees expressed disappointment with the slow speed in which women's rights are being enacted. Jordan is moving in the right direction, many believe, but at the wrong pace. There is more aspiration than implementation. For Jordan to take courageous and deliberate steps, the Euro-Med should build a mechanism to oversee implementation and evaluation.

Jordan is trying to market itself as progressive and aspires to move toward holistic democratization to meet its moral responsibility and commitment to human rights and gender equality; the real barrier is the huge gap between what Jordan aspires and what is happening in the field. This discrepancy between the ideal and the actual is our threat.

3. MEASURES OUTLINED IN THE MINISTERIAL CONCLUSIONS TO BE IMPLEMENTED MORE URGENTLY AND WHY

A. The crucial role of education

Investing in human resources is the number one priority in Jordan and education is one of its tool.

Education is a weapon of two edges: it either indoctrinates and conditions learning to false ideologies or it liberates and empowers to create a better world.

A big majority gives urgency to the role of education as a tool to prevent all forms of violence and discrimination against women in addition to promoting real equality, a balanced and stereotype-free image of men and women.

Education and culture are the tools that are required to reach real equality.

The education of individuals is often seen by the interviewees as the cornerstone of development, whether it be the development of the individual, society, or the country.

School textbooks are the first blueprints that mould our consciousness.

They add that women's empowerment through education is a fundamental element in achieving gender equality.

B. Education of women specifically

Education and media are the two basic tools of shaping people's mind-set, their thinking habits and their perception norms.

The economic, health and social status of a woman can be improved by providing proper education. With access to information through this education, women's agency increases, allowing them to contribute to household decisions, leading to an increase in educated children, making higher survival rates and increased health benefits in addition to their

contribution in the public terrain, giving them space and scope to practice agency and leadership skills. The education of impoverished women can naturally increase the family income or, in cases of single motherhood, allow them to provide for their children. In addition to the increase in job opportunities, educated women are able to effectively manage household resources. When given the proper tools through education, a woman becomes increasingly aware of the intersecting discriminations in society and can in turn challenge these systems of discrimination. Projects and initiatives that seek to increase women's education should take into account the many factors that prevent gender equality in education.

C. Gender stereotypes and the major role of Media

Education, like media, mainstreams and normalizes our thinking habits, perceptions, aspirations, and expectations. Traditional as well as new media, such as online social media have all become platforms that condone the violence and objectification of women and they perpetuate harmful gender stereotypes that can be internalized by society. The misrepresentation of women in the media normalizes unrealistic and harmful standards.

If the educational and media narrative projects women as passive, submissive and marginal, people will internalize these images of women that will take ages to reverse.

A person's mind-set and consciousness are shaped through media, and gender is socialized and perpetuated. In addition to the harmful portrayals of women in the media, there remains a distinct lack of positive representation.

Media and education perpetuate women's submission and victimization.

Positive representation in media is important in its ability to encourage and show role models that have become successful in traditionally male-oriented occupations. Gender inequalities are first and foremost shaped by education and media. These two mechanisms are the most influential in forming and enhancing peoples' sets of beliefs.

D. Changing the Legislation

Give me a fair legislative system for women, I give you a future of social justice and equity, give me a discriminatory legislative system, I give you a world drowned in its abuse and manipulation.

Some of the interviewees give urgency to strengthening the citizenship status of women by guaranteeing women the right to equal protection by the law. There are numerous laws and regulations as well as international instruments that aim to empower women in social, economic and political sectors.

Empowering women and achieving gender equality is best achieved through legislation and laws.

Although these legislations are created to ensure and protect the rights of women in a patriarchal society, the proper enforcement of them remains limited.

The empowerment of women through legislation remains an important aspect in maintaining gender equality as these laws can work to protect women's rights and freedoms.

Equal legislation to men and women minimizes the chances of a society to build itself on power relations and power hegemony.

However, while legislation is important in the gender equality process, it has a limited effect when applied on its own. It requires the benefit of proper enforcement and societal acceptance.

E. Promoting women's leadership

Dissemination of cultural sayings and proverbs on women's capacity and ability to lead can help see more women in leadership positions.

Very few interviewees give urgency to increasing women's participation in the political decision-making processes at all levels, but they also hasten to add

that special attention should be given to creating a paradigm shift in leadership to foreground the unacknowledged area of women's leadership.

There should be programs documenting all forms of women leadership, especially those grass-root leaderships that developed an authentic paradigm stemming from their own empowerment resources.

Women, they stress, who create their own agency in a limited or zero resource environment that makes a difference in their own circle and the wider circle of their society, are national heroines. The effect of politics and public policies of a nation should reach all individuals in society including women. Thus, in order for the government to provide a far-reaching, inclusive and responsive political process, the participation of women in civil society organizations and political parties should be encouraged. Being unrepresented in facets of the political process excludes women from the decision-making process, which clearly without them does little to promote gender justice. Promoting a gender sensitive lens, as well as increasing the number of women in high governmental positions, is an essential aspect of gender equality and female empowerment.

Seeing women in leadership positions actualizes the leadership of women, and people start accepting of it.

Training provided to female members of political parties, potential political candidates and grassroots movement leaders is a common initiative implemented by international organizations. This helps build the capacity of the candidates and encourages them to include gender sensitive policies in public policymaking. Policies working to empower women through political participation should seek to address women at a broader level instead of targeting female candidates only. By expanding this outreach, women can effectively promote and obtain gender equality and increase political leadership.

Women leadership should be taught at school, read in children's literature and projected in the media.

Private space, where women succeeded in leading, is microcosmic of the public space where they could equally lead. Women are innate leaders and can lead effectively. If they can rule a family, they can rule society."

Women agency of leadership which they developed in their private spaces can be easily appropriated to other public spaces.

F. Putting an end to the exclusion of women from the public space

How women are perceived in public spaces says nothing about women (the perceived), but says a lot about the attitude and the mind-set of the perceivers.

The issue of women-unfriendly public spaces is a shared concern. Under constant unsolicited scrutiny, women are conditioned to body-police themselves and be conscious of the way they appear to society. For example, closely controlling and limiting certain postures or actions is an attempt by women to limit the possibility of experiencing assault.

How the body of women is perceived in public spaces, projected and socialized can be traumatizing to women.

G. Fighting street sexual harassment

Violating the space of women's body with harassment is an indicator that a society and a State have failed in bringing up good citizens.

In many cases, such self-inflicted tactics and strategies do little to change the risk and vulnerabilities women face in public spaces.

It is cowardice when some men think that they have the right to practice sovereignty and power over women through turning women into an object for their gaze and crazy hallucination.

The right to feel safe in a public area is not limited to a certain gender. Therefore, women, as much as men, should be able to enjoy freedom of

movement and participate in public life without inhibition, fear or the threat of violence.

Women should have full ownership of public spaces to navigate easily and safely in it.

Public spaces in Jordan are causing agoraphobia for women who are perceived in these spaces as fetish and sex symbols.

If this issue continues to remain neglected, it will harshly affect women's security and wellbeing as well as their ability to exercise their rights as equal citizens.

Most women have experienced, more than once in a lifetime, being an object of real harassment or gaze, which makes public spaces hostile and oppressive to women.

Women should be empowered to obtain full access to public spaces or places. Mainstreaming gender equality into development and urban planning is a critical element for reducing gender-based street harassment. Women focus-groups can assist by consulting with urban planners, as they are able to place emphasis on certain gender-sensitive issues which planners may overlook.

Public spaces should be designed as enabling environments for everybody, especially for the vulnerable and the marginalized.

H. Filling the gap between rural and urban areas

Bridging the gap of activism between grassroots women and elite women and between rural women and urban is a very necessary step for building a viable and holistic paradigm of women activism in Jordan.

Only a couple of interviewees touched upon the urgency of bridging the gap between women in rural and urban areas. A woman's residence in either a rural or urban setting is an influential factor in determining the form of gender equality/inequality she might face.

In urban areas women are closer to resources with many choices for them, which is the reverse in the rural areas.

Geographic location can impact women in a number of sectors, such as health, education, as well as economically. Residing in a remote or isolated area, rural women experience limited access to health facilities. This is an obvious disadvantage, for it can lead to delayed diagnosis of harmful illnesses and treatment. For similar reasons, the literacy and educational levels of women in rural areas are lower when compared to their urban counterparts. It is crystal clear, it should be noted, that women in urban areas and men in rural areas fare better compared to impoverished women of rural residences. In order to properly empower women to achieve gender equality, policies and programs must acknowledge and take into account the diverse factors that may affect women. Improving rural women's access to resources for instance, in cases of agricultural farming, increases household income, which can positively affect child nutrition, health and education. By decreasing the distance of schools as well as lowering the school and university fees, the attendance rate of women and girls in rural areas could increase as well.

PART C: QUANTITATIVE PHASE

ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The objective of the quantitative phase is to establish a correlation between various demographic factors including, but not limited to age, residence, occupation, and support of women's rights, awareness of the Ministerial Conclusions, and Jordan's role in the Euro-Med Ministerial Process on "Strengthening the Role of Women in Society".

The set of questions aims at measuring:

- Categorization of women's rights and gender equality in Jordan
- Perceived change regarding women's rights in Jordan
- Legitimation of gender-based discrimination according to circumstances
- Level of knowledge about the Euro-Med Ministerial Process and its Conclusions
- Through what methods were respondents exposed to the Ministerial Conclusions (if any)
- Which measures agreed upon by the Ministers should be most urgently implemented
- Perceived role of Jordan in the Euro-Med Ministerial Process
- Future steps to be taken by the Jordanian government in the field of women's rights and gender equality

Main measures from the Ministerial Conclusions were summarized and provided in the questionnaire's framework.

The questionnaire was distributed to grass-root associations with the support of Arab Women Organization. About 40 questionnaires have been distributed in each of the 12 directorates, reaching a total of 484 respondents.

In 10 governorates, the questionnaires were administered during organized meetings with the participants, where a staff member of IFE-EFI was present to provide clarification when necessary and to gather the completed forms. In

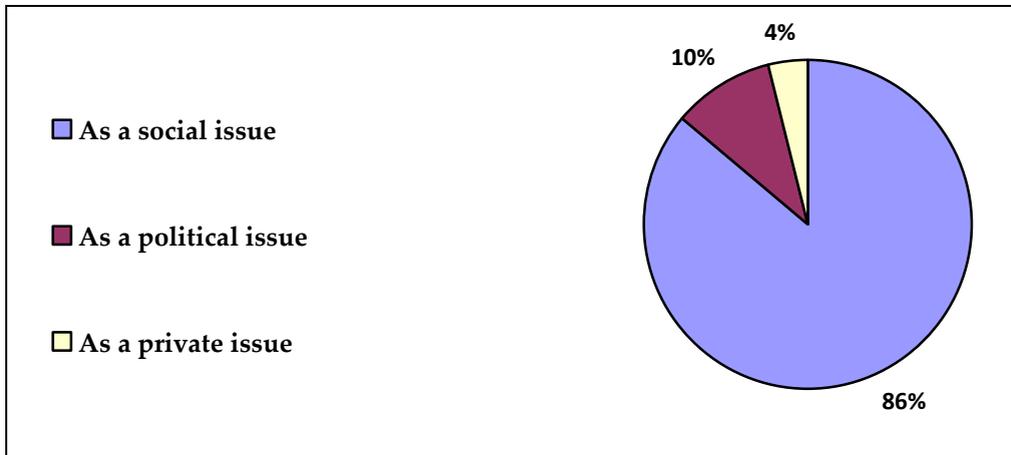
2 governorates (Maan and Tafilah) the questionnaire responses were gathered and sent to IFE-EFI by focal points of Arab Women’s Organization.

The anonymity of the participants was guaranteed and respected throughout the distributing and collecting process.

The results of this phase show a number of general characteristic similarities between the different groups studied, independent of age, family status, rural or urban residence, occupation, and religious belonging.

MAIN FINDINGS

- **Definition of women’s rights and gender equality as a social issue**



The above percentages clearly demonstrate that the population studied classifies women’s rights as a predominantly social issue. This indicates that there is no perceived link between the political decision-making sphere and women’s rights, or between democracy and women’s rights. Such a result is in line with low political participation in Jordan. This means that if any policy is to be successful, it should consider social trends.

The low percentage of respondents that classify women’s rights as a private issue is promising. Wrongdoing cannot be kept behind the closed doors of households any longer.

- **Perception of an improvement of the situation of women in Jordan in the past ten years**

88 % of participants believe that there has been a positive change in regards to women's rights in Jordan during the last decade. This can be used as an indicator that actions of the government and women's rights organizations are yielding results. The role of Jordan in the Euro-Med Ministerial Process, the public campaigns and debates on nationality law, as well as the promotion of women in the political sphere by women's rights organizations and effective alliances have all contributing to the positive perception of change.

- **Perception of tradition and culture as social barriers towards gender equality**

75% of the respondents evaluate tradition and culture as serious obstacles to women's rights. Both have very close ratings, which indicates that tradition plays a central role in local culture and that the terms are even interchangeably used.

On the other hand, religion is seen as a barrier to women's rights by less than 50% of the respondents. In addition, 15% state that religion is unimportant as a barrier to women's rights. The distinction between religion and culture & tradition is marked. The notion that religion is inherently gender-equal and positive shows prevalence. Any misuse of religion is seen as a distortion and fault is not attributed to religion. Among other sources, the study titled "Breaking the circles of silence "is relevant.

- **High social tolerance towards discrimination against women**

47% of the respondents think circumstances justify gender-based discrimination. Almost half of the respondents do not see gender-equality as a value that should be upheld unconditionally.

Such relativist dispositions are widespread and deeply rooted in traditional or cultural contexts. The subordination of women is sustained by the persistence of patriarchal structures in private and public life. Women have internalized

discrimination where the rights of men are dominant over the rights of women.

- **Widespread lack of knowledge of the Euro-Med Ministerial Process**

More than two thirds of respondents have never heard of the Euro-Med Ministerial Conclusions of Paris 2013. The gap between the formal rights as granted by treaties and the reality of daily life for women is a universal pattern. Women are quite unaware of the rights they need to demand, which underlines the urgency and necessity of raising awareness for the Istanbul Marrakech Process.

- **Highly positive opinion about the Ministerial Conclusions**

The Ministerial Conclusions 2013 address major sources of gender inequality and propose solutions to improve the situation of women. 83% of respondents perceived them as an important tool to promote women's rights.

In order to improve women's rights in the Jordanian society, respondents put high priority on the following measures:

- awareness raising and education on women's rights
- fight against cultural taboos and traditional gender roles
- equal participation of women in all spheres of life, including politics
- increasing of freedom and social justice

The above-stated focus is in coherence with the weight attributed to tradition and culture as barriers to equality.

- **The role of Jordan in the Euro-Med Ministerial Process**

The respondents thought that Jordan's role has not been sufficient thus far but is increasing in the Ministerial Process. This should be an incentive for the Jordanian government to play an even stronger part in the Ministerial Process. This result can be appreciated as a point of departure for the government.

Q 1 to 6: The sample

484 questionnaires

| Region | Number | Percentage |
|--------------|--------|------------|
| Ajloun | 40 | 8,3% |
| Amman | 43 | 8,9% |
| Aqaba | 47 | 9,7% |
| Irbid | 42 | 8,7% |
| Jerash | 40 | 8,3% |
| Karak | 40 | 8,3% |
| Maan | 33 | 6,8% |
| Madaba | 40 | 8,3% |
| Mafraq | 40 | 8,3% |
| Salt/ Balqaa | 40 | 8,3% |
| Tafila | 38 | 7,9% |
| Zarqa | 41 | 8,5% |

| Nationality | Number | Percentage |
|-------------|--------|------------|
| Jordanian | 453 | 93,5% |
| Palestinian | 14 | 3% |
| Other | 17 | 3,5% |
| Total | 484 | 100% |

| Age | 18-29 | 30-49 | 50 and above | Total |
|-----------------|----------|--------------------|--------------|-------|
| Number | 167 | 209 | 108 | 484 |
| % | 35% | 43% | 22% | 100% |
| | | | | |
| Economic status | Employed | Unemployed | Others | Total |
| Number | 265 | 182 | 37 | 484 |
| % | 55% | 38% | 8% | 100% |
| | | | | |
| Residence | Village | City and outskirts | Others | Total |
| Number | 102 | 361 | 21 | 484 |
| % | 21% | 75% | 4% | 100% |
| | | | | |
| Religion | Muslim | Christian | Others | Total |
| Number | 451 | 30 | 3 | 484 |
| % | 93% | 6% | 1% | 100% |

The above table illustrates the distribution of the sample based on the demographic factors of age, economic status, residence and religion. All of the factors correspond closely to the percentages in Jordan as a whole. Urban population is at around 83% and 97% Muslim. As the age group under 18 was not covered in the study, the age distribution also corresponds to the age distribution in Jordan. In addition, the sample was mostly comprised of women; therefore, the employment rate also corresponds to the estimated employment rate of women for the specified age groups.

Q7: How would you qualify women's rights and gender equality in Jordan?

The percentages clearly show that the population studied classifies women’s rights as a predominantly social issue. This indicates that there is no perceived link between democracy and women’s rights. Such a result is in line with low political participation in Jordan. This means that if any policy is to be successful, its writers should consider social trends.

The low percentage of participants that classify women’s rights as a private issue is promising and shows a positive development of society from a rights perspective.

| All together | % who think women’s rights is | | |
|--------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| | a social issue | a political issue | a private issue |
| | 86 % | 10% | 4% |

There is no significant correlation between age, economic status and residence on whether respondents see women’s rights as a social issue. Employed respondents have a slightly higher percentage of qualifying women’s rights as a political issue, while the unemployed have slightly higher percentage in qualifying them as a private issue. Respondents living in rural areas are twice more likely to consider women’s rights as a private issue in comparison to the overall average. Difference is more marked when religious belonging is examined. Muslims are more likely to regard women’s rights as a social issue

(86% versus 76% for Christians) while Christians are more likely to define them as a political issue (23% versus 9% for Muslims) ⁴⁰

| | % who think women's rights is | | |
|--------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Age | a social issue | a political issue | a private issue |
| 18-29 | 88% | 8% | 4% |
| 30-49 | 84% | 11% | 5% |
| 50 and above | 86% | 9% | 5% |

| | % who think women's rights is | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Economic status | a social issue | a political issue | a private issue |
| Employed | 85% | 12% | 3% |
| Unemployed | 86% | 7% | 7% |

| | % who think women's rights is | | |
|-----------|-------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Residency | a social issue | a political issue | a private issue |
| Rural | 84% | 7% | 9% |
| Urban | 87% | 10% | 3% |

| | % who think women's rights is | | |
|-----------|-------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Religion | a social issue | a political issue | a private issue |
| Muslim | 86% | 9% | 5% |
| Christian | 73% | 23% | 4% |

Q 8 and 9: What are the changes in Jordan in regards to women's rights in the past 10 years?

The vast majority (88%) considers that there was an improvement in women's rights in Jordan during the last decade. Only 3% have the opposite opinion.

| All together | % improved | % regressed | % stagnated | % do not know |
|--------------|------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| | 88% | 3% | 6% | 3% |

Economic status, religion and residence do not have an effect on the perception of the progress of women's rights. On the other hand, the youngest

⁴⁰ While being cautious as said regarding the characteristics of the sample

age group shows higher rate of pessimism towards change, with (78%) stating there is progress as compared to (93%) of the participants as a whole.

| Age | % improved | % regressed | % stagnated | % do not know |
|--------------|------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| 18-29 | 78% | 7% | 10% | 5% |
| 30-49 | 92% | 1% | 5% | 2% |
| 50 and above | 94% | 1% | 4% | 1% |

| Economic status | % improved | % regressed | % stagnated | % do not know |
|-----------------|------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| Employed | 90% | 3% | 6% | 1% |
| Unemployed | 85% | 4% | 7% | 5% |

| Residency | % improved | % regressed | % stagnated | % do not know |
|-----------|------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| Rural | 89% | 3% | 7% | 1% |
| Urban | 87% | 4% | 6% | 3% |

| Religion | % improved | % regressed | % stagnated | % do not know |
|-----------|------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| Muslim | 88% | 3% | 6% | 3% |
| Christian | 87% | 3% | 10% | - |

Q 10: According to you what are the main barriers to achieving gender equality in Jordan?

The factors that are the most prevalently qualified as obstacles to women's rights are tradition (74%) and culture (73%) and are followed by laws (59%). Both religion and regional context are qualified as important barriers, scoring (48%) each. More specifically, religion is considered unimportant by the highest percentage among the factors (15%), which is twice the percentage of the second least important factor (8% for regional context).

| | All together / percentages | | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------|----------|------|---------|
| | culture | tradition | religion | laws | context |
| Very or extremely important | 73% | 74% | 48% | 59% | 48% |
| Very important | 45% | 37% | 24% | 39% | 28% |
| Extremely important | 28% | 37% | 25% | 20% | 15% |
| Slightly or moderately important | 23% | 24% | 37% | 35% | 34% |
| Unimportant | 4% | 2% | 15% | 6% | 8% |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

There is a correlation between the different barriers among respondents. For example, 78% of those who consider culture a very or extremely important barrier, think the same about tradition. By the same token, more than 75% of those who consider laws an important barrier think the same about tradition. 50% of those who consider culture and tradition barriers to women’s rights also consider religion to be so. On the contrary, 75% of those who consider religion a barrier also consider culture and tradition barriers as well.

| <i>Very or extremely important</i> | <i>culture</i> | <i>tradition</i> | <i>religion</i> | <i>laws</i> | <i>context</i> |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------|----------------|
| Culture very or extremely important | | 77% | 78% | 78% | 74% |
| Tradition very or extremely important | 78% | | 75% | 76% | 71% |
| Religion very or extremely important | 52% | 49% | | 56% | 45% |
| Laws very or extremely important | 63% | 61% | 68% | | 67% |
| Context very or extremely important | 49% | 46% | 45% | 55% | |

It is noteworthy that irrespective of the valuation of each factor as a barrier to achieving gender equality in Jordan, the differences have no impact on how respondents qualify women’s rights and gender equality, nor on the perception of the changes in regards to women’s rights in the past 10 years. The vast majority defines women’s rights in Jordan as a social issue and sees improvement in the level of women’s rights.

| How would you qualify women’s rights and gender equality in Jordan? | | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------|----------------|
| <i>Very or extremely important</i> | <i>Culture</i> | <i>tradition</i> | <i>religion</i> | <i>laws</i> | <i>context</i> |
| A social issue | 86% | 85% | 86% | 83% | 82% |
| A political issue | 9% | 11% | 10% | 13% | 14% |
| A private issue | 5% | 4% | 4% | 5% | 4% |

| What are the changes in Jordan in regards to women's rights in the past 10 years | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------|----------------|
| <i>Very or extremely important</i> | <i>Culture</i> | <i>tradition</i> | <i>religion</i> | <i>laws</i> | <i>context</i> |
| Improved | 91% | 87% | 83% | 86% | 87% |
| Stagnated or regressed | 7% | 10% | 13% | 11% | 2% |
| Do not know | 1% | 3% | 4% | 2% | 2% |

Also, more than 40% of respondents agree with the notion that gender-based discrimination can be circumstantially justified.

| There are situations where discrimination based on gender is justified | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------|----------------|
| Very or extremely important | <i>Culture</i> | <i>tradition</i> | <i>religion</i> | <i>laws</i> | <i>context</i> |
| Disagree | 52 | 51 | 44 | 51 | 48 |
| Agree | 40 | 43 | 45 | 42 | 46 |
| Don't Know | 8 | 6 | 11 | 7 | 6 |

We find a similar convergence concerning the perception of the on-going political processes.

| How do you perceive the Ministerial Conclusions | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------|----------------|
| Very or extremely important | <i>Culture</i> | <i>tradition</i> | <i>religion</i> | <i>laws</i> | <i>context</i> |
| As an important tool | 85 | 85 | 81 | 83 | 84 |
| As one more gov. statement | 9 | 9 | 8 | 9 | 8 |
| I don't feel very concerned, or I don't Know | 6 | 6 | 11 | 8 | 8 |

| Among the major measures, circle the one that needs to be addressed most urgently | | | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------|----------------|
| <i>Very or extremely important</i> | <i>Culture</i> | <i>tradition</i> | <i>religion</i> | <i>laws</i> | <i>context</i> |
| Measure 1 | 26 | 25 | 24 | 25 | 23 |
| Measure 2 | 17 | 20 | 16 | 20 | 18 |
| Measure 3 | 16 | 19 | 20 | 17 | 17 |
| Measure 4 | 20 | 15 | 19 | 17 | 19 |
| Measure 5 | 8 | 7 | 5 | 6 | 6 |
| Measure 6 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 |
| More than one | 9 | 9 | 11 | 11 | 14 |

Q11: Are there situations where discrimination based on gender is justified?

The results are polarized. 39% of respondents affirm that women's rights are not a universal value and can be foregone if the circumstances "call for it". On the other hand, the majority disagrees and asserts that gender-based discrimination is not acceptable. Nevertheless, it is alarming that such a high percentage of respondents find discrimination acceptable. Demographic factors, such as age and residence have little effect on the attitude towards the acceptance of discrimination, which indicates the attitude has permeated all segments of society.

| All together % | |
|----------------|-----|
| Disagree | 53% |
| Agree | 39% |
| Don't Know | 8% |

| Age | | 18-29 | 30-49 | 50 and above |
|-----|------------|-------|-------|--------------|
| | Disagree | 53% | 51% | 55% |
| | Agree | 36% | 40% | 41% |
| | Don't Know | 11% | 9% | 4% |

| Economic status | | Employed | Unemployed |
|-----------------|------------|----------|------------|
| | Disagree | 59% | 42% |
| | Agree | 39% | 40% |
| | Don't Know | 2% | 18% |

| Residence | | Village | City |
|-----------|------------|---------|------|
| | Disagree | 52% | 53% |
| | Agree | 38% | 39% |
| | Don't Know | 10% | 8% |

| Religion | | Muslim | Christian |
|----------|------------|--------|-----------|
| | Disagree | 52% | 70% |
| | Agree | 39% | 27% |
| | Don't Know | 9% | 3% |

The distribution between those who approve and disapprove of this opinion is almost the same or very similar, regardless of age and residence.

As often in such studies, the rate of unemployment is higher for respondents who answer with "do not know". The only very significant result here concerns the religious belonging: 70% of the Christians disapprove and 27% approve, but the weak number of Christian people in the sample should be kept in mind in order to avoid the making of unfounded conclusions.

Q12: Have you heard about Euro-mediterranean Istanbul Marrakech process and its Ministerial Conclusions about women's rights?

More than the two thirds of the respondents (68%) have not heard of the Ministerial Process. The (32%) who are familiar, have been exposed to them mainly via Media (13%) and via women's rights organizations (10%).

| All together | % |
|-----------------------------------------|-----|
| Yes | 32% |
| Yes (via women's rights organizations) | 10% |
| Yes (via media) | 13% |
| Yes (other) | 5% |
| Through more than one medium | 2% |
| No | 68% |

The percentage of people who were aware of the Ministerial Process increased with age (21%), (35%), (45%). Employment also had a positive effect on awareness (37% versus 25% for unemployed); urban residence had similar effect (35% versus 25% of rural). Religious belonging indicated that Muslims were more aware than Christians (33%/20%).

| Age | 18-29 | 30-49 | 50 and above |
|-----------------------------------------|-------|-------|--------------|
| Yes | 21% | 35% | 45% |
| Yes (Via women's rights organizations). | 5% | 12% | 15% |
| Yes (Via media) | 9% | 14% | 19% |
| Yes (via friend or other) | 6% | 6% | 8% |
| More than one | 1% | 2% | 4% |
| No | 79% | 65% | 55% |

| Economic status | Employed | Unemployed |
|----------------------------------------|----------|------------|
| Yes | 37% | 25% |
| Yes (Via women's rights organizations) | 12% | 7% |
| Yes (Via media) | 17% | 9% |
| Yes (via friend or other) | 6% | 8% |
| More than one | 2% | 1% |
| No | 63% | 75% |

| Residence | Village | City |
|----------------------------------------|----------------|-------------|
| Yes | 25% | 35% |
| Yes (Via women's rights organizations) | 8% | 11% |
| Yes (Via media) | 14% | 14% |
| Yes (via friend or other) | 2% | 8% |
| More than one | 1% | 2% |
| No | 75% | 65% |

| Religion | Muslim | Christian |
|----------------------------------------|---------------|------------------|
| Yes | 33% | 20% |
| Yes (Via women's rights organizations) | 10% | 7% |
| Yes (Via media) | 14% | 7% |
| Yes (via friend or other) | 7% | 3% |
| More than one | 2% | 3% |
| No | 67% | 80% |

Q13: How do you perceive the Ministerial Conclusions?

Main measures from the Ministerial Conclusions

- 1. Ensuring equal participation of women and men in all spheres of life constitutes a fundamental and universal right** as well as an indispensable precondition of sustainable socio-economic development and good democratic governance.
- 2. Increasing women's participation in the political decision-making processes at all levels**, including in situations of political transformation, by ensuring their freedom of movements, by promoting their participation in elections and in government; by promoting their active participation in local communities, in civil society organizations, as well as in national political life.
- 3. Strengthening the citizenship status of women by ensuring women the right to equal protection by the law** including equal rights with men to acquire, change or retain nationality and the possibility to transmit nationality to children.
- 4. Promoting education as a tool for the prevention of all forms of violence against women** by establishing trainings for all actors concerned by the fight against violence, such as public officials and

civil servants, including judiciary, police, politicians, medical professionals, teachers, boys and girls at school; by engaging, educating and supporting men and boys to take responsibility for their behaviour.

5. **Reducing disparities between rural and urban women and girls** by ensuring access to education, to technical and vocational training, new technologies and to financial assistance and credits; by promoting women's entrepreneurship also in rural areas as well as by establishing and developing childcare and family support and services in remote rural areas.
6. **Promoting a balanced and non-stereotypical portrayal of women and men in the media and in the education system**, and raising consciousness of the society on gender equality with a view to promote women empowerment by organizing awareness and educational campaigns.

Results

| All together | |
|---------------------------------------------|------|
| As an important tool to promote women right | 83% |
| As one more governmental statement | 9% |
| I don't feel very concerned or I don't Know | 8% |
| Total | 100% |

The vast majority (83%) value the Ministerial Conclusions as an important tool for the promotion of women's rights. This view is mostly upheld by the oldest age group. Young people feel most disengaged with the process, as 16% of them state they do not feel very concerned, whereas only 3% of the oldest age group indicated the same disinterested sentiment. Unemployment also negatively influences attitude towards the conclusions (15% versus 5% for employed). A similar but less pronounced difference was present in rural zones (12%) in comparison to cities (7%). The overall percentage of respondents who have negative attitudes towards the Conclusions is low, yet it is vital to note how demographic factors influence results.

| Age | 18-29 | 30-49 | 50 and above |
|------------------------------------------------|-------|-------|--------------|
| As an important tool to promote women's rights | 76% | 83% | 92% |
| As one more governmental statement | 8% | 11% | 6% |
| I don't feel very concerned or I don't Know | 16% | 6% | 3% |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% |

| Economic status | Employed | Unemployed |
|------------------------------------------------|----------|------------|
| As an important tool to promote women's rights | 85% | 80% |
| As one more governmental statement | 9% | 5% |
| I don't feel very concerned or I don't Know | 6% | 15% |
| Total | 100% | 100% |

| Residence | Village | City |
|------------------------------------------------|---------|------|
| As an important tool to promote women's rights | 79% | 84% |
| As one more governmental statement | 9% | 9% |
| I don't feel very concerned or I don't Know | 12% | 7% |
| Total | 100% | 100% |

| Religion | Muslim | Christian |
|------------------------------------------------|--------|-----------|
| As one more governmental statement | 9% | 10% |
| As an important tool to promote women's rights | 82% | 87% |
| I don't feel very concerned or I don't Know | 9% | 3% |
| Total | 100% | 100% |

Q 14: Among the major measures presented above, circle the one that needs to be implemented most urgently?

The first measure is cited as most urgent by 25% of respondents, followed by measure two, three and four (almost 20% respectively). Measure 5 and 6 are not seen as a priority.

| All together | |
|-----------------------|------|
| Measure 1 | 25% |
| Measure 2 | 19% |
| Measure 3 | 18% |
| Measure 4 | 19% |
| Measure 5 | 8% |
| Measure 6 | 4% |
| More than one measure | 7% |
| Total | 100% |

There are marked differences in the way each age groups prioritizes the measures. The youngest age group equally values measures one and four. On the other hand, the oldest age group finds the first measure three times more important than the fourth.

The first measure, ensuring **equal participation**, has the highest priority for employed participants, while the third, **strengthening the citizenship status of women** is at the forefront for the unemployed.

For rural residents the fifth measure, **reducing disparities between rural and urban women and girls**, predominates over the third measure related to **citizenship**, whereas the opposite is true for the urban dwellers.

Finally, Christians, in contrast to Muslims, gave the highest importance to the second measure, **increasing women's participation in the political decision-making processes**, and much less importance to the fourth conclusion, namely **promoting education as a tool for the prevention of all forms of violence against women**.

| Age | 18-29 | 30-49 | 50 and above |
|-----------------------|-------|-------|--------------|
| Measure 1 | 23% | 24% | 31% |
| Measure 2 | 15% | 18% | 27% |
| Measure 3 | 20% | 17% | 18% |
| Measure 4 | 23% | 19% | 11% |
| Measure 5 | 8% | 8% | 6% |
| Measure 6 | 4% | 5% | 1% |
| More than one measure | 6% | 9% | 7% |

| Economic status | Employed | Unemployed |
|-----------------------|----------|------------|
| Measure 1 | 28% | 24% |
| Measure 2 | 21% | 13% |
| Measure 3 | 12% | 28% |
| Measure 4 | 19% | 19% |
| Measure 5 | 8% | 7% |
| Measure 6 | 5% | 1% |
| More than one measure | 7% | 8% |

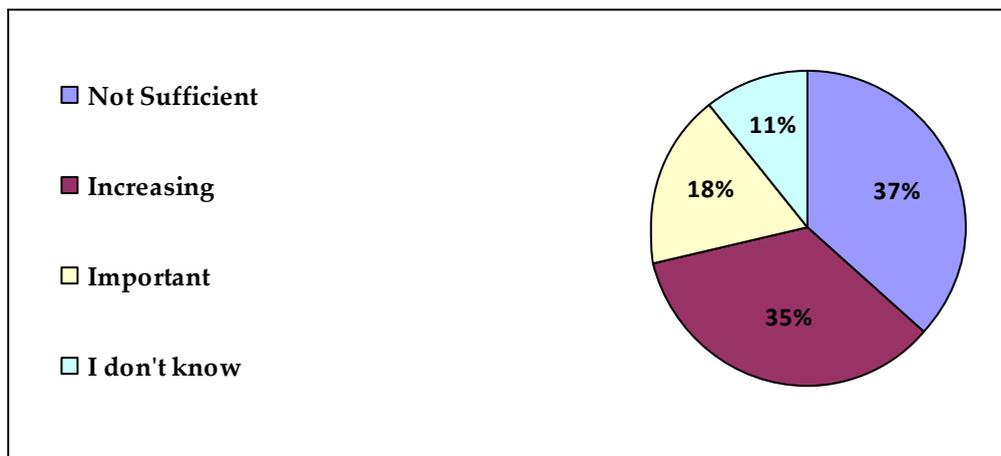
| Residence | Village | City |
|-----------------------|----------------|-------------|
| Measure 1 | 24% | 27% |
| Measure 2 | 25% | 18% |
| Measure 3 | 9% | 18% |
| Measure 4 | 20% | 19% |
| Measure 5 | 14% | 6% |
| Measure 6 | 3% | 4% |
| More than one measure | 6% | 8% |

| Religion | Muslim | Christian |
|-----------------------|---------------|------------------|
| Measure 1 | 25% | 23% |
| Measure 2 | 18% | 30% |
| Measure 3 | 18% | 27% |
| Measure 4 | 20% | 7% |
| Measure 5 | 8% | 0% |
| Measure 6 | 3% | 7% |
| More than one measure | 8% | 7% |
| Total | 100% | 100% |

Q 15: How do you perceive the role of Jordan in this Ministerial Regional Process

Four options were provided for the respondents to describe their perception of the role of Jordan in the Ministerial Process. “Increasing but not sufficient” is the evaluation of Jordan’s role so far. As the highest two categories point out (“not sufficient” and “increasing”), there is a marked divide in the opinion of respondents, illuminating the fact that more involvement and increased measures on behalf of the government both desired by the public and needed. Almost one-fifth (18%) of respondents evaluate the role of Jordan as important, which is a positive statement.

Answer Options



| All together | % |
|----------------|-----|
| Important | 18% |
| Not sufficient | 36% |

We get here similar results regardless of the category of respondents.

| Age | 18-29 | 30-49 | 50 and above |
|----------------|-------|-------|--------------|
| Important | 18% | 16% | 20% |
| Not sufficient | 34% | 38% | 36% |

| Economic status | Employed | Unemployed |
|-----------------|----------|------------|
| Important | 18% | 16% |
| Not sufficient | 36% | 36% |

| Residence | Village | City |
|----------------|---------|------|
| Important | 17% | 16% |
| Not sufficient | 42% | 37% |

| Religion | Muslim | Christian |
|----------------|--------|-----------|
| Important | 18% | 20% |
| Not sufficient | 37% | 27% |

Q 16: Independently of the Ministerial Conclusions, what would be the two prior measures needed and possible in Jordan in the field of women's rights and gender equality?

Participants were asked to suggest two measures on which Jordan should focus. The numbers at the end of every line indicate how many times a particular measure was suggested.

1. Raising awareness of gender equality and women's rights. Fighting stereotypes, traditional gender roles and cultural taboos -64
2. Changing or amending legislation so that equality between women and men is promoted, included in constitution -53
3. Equal participation and role of women in all spheres of life -41
4. Gender sensitive education and training as soon as school begins -38
5. Participation of women in all political bodies/life -37
6. Increasing freedom, social justice and respect of fundamental rights and full citizenship. Freedom of expression, addressing discrimination against women -31
7. Increasing the participation of women and their access to labour market, equal treatment in the work place -24
8. Increasing women's participation in decision-making, including on local level -22
9. Implementation of laws related to women's rights and international conventions -15
10. Using traditions to promote equality -13
11. Filling the gap between urban women and rural women -11
12. Empowering women; Encouraging women's agency and activism -10
13. Introducing quota -9
14. Fighting violence against women -8
15. Supporting institutions and CSOs relevant to women's rights -6
16. Separation between State and religion -5
17. Engaging men in promoting gender equality -4
18. Micro credits -3
19. Refusal of cultural and tribal specificities, refusal of cultural relativism and tribalism -2

First priority is given to a measure connected with raising awareness and education on gender equality and fighting stereotypes (item 1, strengthened by item 4).

The second measure is connected with changing of legal framework (item 2, strengthened by item 15) towards respect of fundamental women's rights, gender equality, citizenship, freedom, and social justice (item 6).

Thirdly comes the participation and role of women in all spheres of life (item 3 strengthened by items 7 and 8).

These results coincide with the perception of culture and traditions as the major obstacles to women's rights and confirm that women's rights are an issue concerning the whole society. They also confirm that the improvement of women's rights will require a comprehensive, social and political approach involving all the spheres of Jordanian society in order to change the mind-sets established by millenaries of traditions and cultural taboos, and to create the legal frame that will support women in defending their rights.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

If a society succumbs to its habits, traditions and policies of exclusion of women and does not challenge them, it naturally normalizes all kinds of exclusion and 'othering', leaving society fragmented and lost in its biases and discrimination.

Women have always aspired to attain gender equality while working to empower themselves and eliminate gender disparities in all spheres of life. In spite of some positive achievements, discrimination against women persists and keeps women in a subordinate position across the world. Social tolerance of this discrimination remains a universal pattern.

In the present context, most Arab societies are deeply influenced by both conservative and nationalistic sentiments, which are hindrances to the advancement of women's rights. The power of religious conservative voices, which has increased significantly following the downfall of authoritarian regimes during the Arab spring, is one of the numerous forces at work in sidelining women's issues, preventing women from attaining gender equality in the social, political, and economic spheres. The ongoing conflicts in Syria, in Iraq and the occupation of Palestine, have negative social and political impact on the country.

Security concerns and regional development affect the status of women's rights and gender equality. Addressing the rising regional challenges and finding a solution to recent crises has become a central priority to the state, often enough to place women's issues on the backburner. With the countries' primary focus being essentially on security, urgent issues that need to be addressed, such as women's status and rights, are often side-lined and disregarded. The influx of refugees also contributes to the region's destabilization.

In this context of political unrest, Jordan is exerting immense effort to shoulder responsibility, helping alleviate much of the tension and turbulence in surrounding countries while remaining secure and stable. In addition, Jordan provides asylum to an enormous number of refugees, recently ranked 3rd in having the largest refugee community globally when compared to its

population. The refugee crisis has posed additional obstacles and challenges for women's empowerment and gender equality.

Even if the results of the study show that women's rights in Jordan have improved during the last ten years, there is common agreement that a lot remains to be done to overcome the numerous obstacles of gender equality.

Tradition and culture are perceived to be the major obstacles to women's rights and main sources of inequality, and the distinction among religion, culture and tradition is marked: discrimination is most often attributed to distortion or misusing of religious thought. The high level of social tolerance expressed towards discrimination against women shows that gender-equality is not perceived, including by women themselves, as a value that should be upheld unconditionally.

Furthermore, tradition, culture and internalization of discrimination are linked to personal status law that sustains a legal frame of inequality between women and men. The gap between the national laws and international women's rights conventions, and between existing laws and their implementation remains persistent.

The Euro-Med Ministerial Process, in which the Jordanian government is a part of, is perceived as a very important policy tool to promote and improve women's rights. However, the Ministerial Conclusions remain insufficiently known.

The qualification of discrimination against women predominantly as a social matter and not a private one is a way to claim that all spheres of society, from decisions-makers to citizens, have to address it through implementing the measures envisioned in the Ministerial Conclusions.

The gap between the texts and reality calls for the creation of a body tasked with monitoring and evaluating compliance of the national policies with these conclusions and to edict recommendations for action. This would ensure the operational implementation of the conclusions in order to support the political commitment and make concrete steps to address these challenges on the

policy-making level. On a regional level, such a body is seen to be comprised of experts in the Euro-Med region who follow up on implementation by the signatory countries.

Based on the analysis of responses to the questionnaire and the in-depth interviews, the results underline:

- The importance of annulment and amendments of discriminative laws.
- The need to mainstream gender equality on a ministerial level via the creation of an operational mechanism. Such a mechanism will ensure that the Euro-Med Ministerial Conclusions are not an end of the process but a means, a tool to strengthen gender equality policy-making and maintain a comprehensive approach to women's empowerment.
- The general request to take stronger measures by the government towards ensuring:
 - Gender sensitive education and awareness-raising for women and men.
 - Meaningful participation and role of women in all spheres of public life.

Both emerged as a priority one, especially when it comes to preventing violence and discrimination and counteracting taboos and gender based stereotypes.

- The necessity to tailor programs and work towards a more gender equality friendly environment that promotes and develops women's leadership and encourages women to invest in all spheres of public life in order to ensure their meaningful participation in the decision-making spheres, including political life.

- The crucial role of awareness-raising of the Ministerial Conclusions as a major asset for women's rights not only in Jordan but in the whole region.
- The importance of dialogue between decision-makers, opinion leaders and civil society, towards a society where women and men are of equal worth in order to open the way towards changing discrimination for women legislation and ensure women equal rights, favouring access of women to full citizenship.

The results also show that the Jordanian government is on the right path towards a more gender equal society but that the pace is slow. There is a lot of hope that the Jordanian government will demonstrate that promotion of women as full citizens is a matter of high political priority and to send clear signals that Jordan can keep its leading role in the Euro-Med Ministerial Process.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Paris Ministerial Conclusions

Union for the Mediterranean
Third Ministerial Conference on Strengthening the Role of Women in
Society
Paris, 12th of September 2013

1. The Ministers of the Union for The Mediterranean gathered in this Conference on the role of women in Euro-Mediterranean society in Paris on 12 September 2013 under the Co-Presidency of HE Catherine Ashton, European Union High Representative and Vice-President of the European Commission, HE Reem Abu Hassan, Minister of Social Development of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and HE Najat Vallaud-Belkacem, Minister of Women's Rights and Government spokesperson of the Republic of France in her capacity of host country, are:
2. Supporting the on-going historical changes across the Middle East and North Africa region and determined to work together towards taking concrete steps responding to these changes;
3. Highlighting the important role played by women in these changes and in the on-going political transformation processes in the Southern Mediterranean;
4. Conscious of the opportunities these changes present to build up more stable, prosperous, and inclusive societies and ensure the strengthening of the role of women and to promote and safeguard their full participation in the political, economic, civil, social and cultural spheres of life;
5. Considering that reforms launched in several countries provided opportunities to advance women's and girl's full enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms, which still needed to be fully exploited in order to achieve the expected improvements in gender equality;

6. Considering also, the need to pay due attention to the contribution of women to the economy, and also to the impact of the current financial and economic crisis and the global economic slowdown on women's lives and gender equality, and the need to integrate gender perspectives and to ensure women's participation in the recovery processes;

7. Recognising the significant contribution that women make to the economy and the major force that they represent for change and development in all sectors of the society; within this context, they attach great importance to respect for women's economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development.

8. Confirming the right of women with disabilities and their empowerment in political, social and economic fields through designing, amending and strengthening policies, especially those related to their rights in education, health and employment, as well as preventing and combating all forms of violence and discrimination against them.

9. Strongly condemning all forms of violence against women and girls, and the violation of their rights, including these committed in situations of armed conflict, foreign occupation, all kinds of terrorism and post-conflict situations, inter alia their right to freedom of movement, to a secure and decent life, and to freely choose their residence without any expulsion by armed and forceful interventions and to undertake all efforts to end these situations;

10. Recognizing that sexual and gender-based violence affects victims and survivors, families, communities and societies, and calling for effective measures of accountability and redress as well as effective remedies; and recalling Security Council resolutions, including Resolution 1325 (2000) and 2106 (2013) as well as other relevant UN Resolutions;

11. Reaffirming the results and conclusions of the preceding Euro-Mediterranean Conferences on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society, held in Istanbul in 2006 and in Marrakech in 2009, including the Istanbul Common Framework of Action 2006-2011;

12. Reaffirming the international obligations and commitments in the area of women's rights, defined in international instruments to which states are parties, including those contained in the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its optional protocol, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the outcomes of their review processes, as well as the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals, and taking into account the Post-2015 framework for international cooperation, which should be treated as a base when seeking solutions for Euro-Mediterranean regional challenges; and recalling the Agreed Conclusions on the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls of the 57th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

13. Reconfirming the importance to promote, de jure and de facto, equality between women and men in their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights;

14. Expressing their support to all levels of government and to the efforts of individuals, groups and organs of society to promote and protect universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms, including civil society organizations, in particular women's rights organisations and human rights defenders, and to networks of women and men engaged in the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment as stakeholders.

15. Accordingly, the Ministers renew their previous commitments in the following areas, which shall be implemented in accordance with their international obligations across the Euro-Mediterranean region:

I. Equal rights of women and men to participate in the political, economic, civil and social life

The Ministers recognize that equal participation of women and men in all spheres of life constitutes a fundamental and universal right, as well as an indispensable precondition of sustainable socio-economic development and

good democratic governance. Their participation is an effective way to tackle political, economic, and educational challenges across the region. In order to promote equal participation of women in political decision-making at the legislative, executive and judicial levels, as well as in private sector positions, the Ministers agree to:

A. Increasing women's participation in the political decision-making processes at all levels, including in situations of political transformation, by ensuring their freedom of movements, by promoting their participation in elections and in government; by promoting their active participation in local communities, in civil society organizations, as well as in national political life; by targeted policies and instruments; by providing women with appropriate tools, including role-models and mentoring; and by addressing their issues and concerns in the political process with the creation of parliamentary caucuses on women's affairs;

B. Ensuring women's participation in reconstruction, peace-building and in policy design in post-conflict by inter alia implementing the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, and by establishing the actual chairs for the women's representatives around the table allowing them to effectively participate in decision-making;

C. Increasing women's participation in economic decision-making processes by promoting representation of women in corporate governance structures as well as in trade unions and employers' organizations; and by mobilising public and private sector resources to support gender equality and empowerment of women in leadership positions;

D. Ensuring gender equality in employment by granting equal access to full employment, equal pay and social protection; by promoting healthy, safe and harassment free working environment; by ensuring safe transport to and from work; by combating involuntary part-time work as well as by providing conditions to reconcile family and work life, including paid maternity and paternity leave, strengthened pregnancy and maternity protection for women

in the workplace, equal division of care and household chores between women and men, child care and of other dependent persons;

E. Improving women's employment in the private sector by addressing mismatch between skills taught in schools and what the labour market demands; by guaranteeing equal access to good quality education, by promoting women's education and training in scientific and technical universities and similar institutions, introducing life-long learning programmes for women and encouraging private companies to introduce training programmes for graduate women; by encouraging the private sector and foundations to invest in programmes and capacity building for women-owned enterprises and career development opportunities for women and girls; and by supporting the recruitment, retention and advancement of women and girls in science, technology and innovation through transparent criteria;

F. Promoting women's entrepreneurship, self-employment and economic independence and empowerment by undertaking legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to provide women with full and equal access to and control over economic resources, in particular to ownership of land and property, including through inheritance; to credits, loans, information, as well as to natural resources and knowledge about technologies; and by encouraging financial institutions to apply a gender perspective to their products and services and to provide microcredits to women;

G. Reducing disparities between rural and urban women and girls by ensuring access to education, to technical and vocational training, new technologies and to financial assistance and credits; by promoting women's entrepreneurship also in rural areas as well as by establishing and developing childcare and family support and services in remote rural areas;

H. Ensuring the integration of gender equality and women's empowerment as a central issue within the post 2015 framework of the Sustainable Development Goals; analysing and implementing lessons learned from efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, with particular reference to

gender equality perspectives and the empowerment of women as a key element of sustainable development and poverty eradication;

I. Strengthening the citizenship status of women by ensuring women the right to equal protection by the law including equal rights with men to acquire, change or retain nationality and the possibility to transmit nationality to children.

II. Combat all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls.

Referring to the Barcelona Declaration and Istanbul Framework of Actions, and recalling the Agreed Conclusions of the 57th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), Ministers strongly condemn all forms of violence against women and girls, and acknowledge that gender-based violence and discrimination violates and impairs the full enjoyment by women and girls of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the UN General Assembly resolutions on intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women, and the resolution aimed at combating female genital mutilation and violence against women, as well as the Agreed Conclusions of the 57th Session of the UN CSW, provide a comprehensive set of measures for the elimination and prevention of all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls. In this context, the Ministers agree to:

A. Addressing more effectively the prevention of and response to all forms of violence against women and girls including domestic violence, sexual harassment and bullying in public spaces when it is being used to intimidate women and girls who are exercising their human rights and fundamental freedoms, particularly freedom of opinion and expression; by adopting coherent and coordinated strategies to prevent and combat all violence against women and girls; by providing appropriate mechanisms of prevention, investigation, prosecution and punishment of perpetrators to end impunity; by ensuring women's right to equal protection by law, access to legal

counselling and to justice as well as the right to adequate healthcare, including sexual and reproductive health, and reproductive rights, in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences;

B. Promoting education as a tool for the prevention of all forms of violence against women by establishing trainings for all actors concerned by the fight against violence, such as public officials and civil servants, including judiciary, police, politicians, medical professionals, teachers, boys and girls at school; by engaging, educating and supporting men and boys to take responsibility for their behaviour; by creating and maintaining an educational climate that is conducive to equality and mutual respect at schools; and by recognising and addressing the important role the media can play, including the social media, in inciting, but also as a tool for social change in combating violence against women and girls;

C. Educating the trainees on judicial bodies, candidates for judges and deputy public prosecutors on the subject of "Treatment of Women Victims in Court Proceedings" in order to improve judicial protection of the rights of women victims of violence, and implementing the inter-agency partner program of prevention with a review to raising awareness of citizens and reporting violence against women;

D. Preventing and combating all forms of sexual violence and violence against women and girls, including the elimination of domestic violence, human trafficking and harmful practices such as female genital mutilations (FGM), as well as child, early, and forced marriage and 'honour crimes' by raising awareness among women and men, boys and girls; by raising the minimum age for marriage to meet the obligations of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child; by reviewing, enacting and strictly enforcing laws and regulations concerning such issues and by generating social support for the enforcement of these laws in order to eliminate such practises combined with penalties for practising them;

E. Guaranteeing an appropriate framework for women victims and survivors of violence by providing appropriate support services and shelters, professional counselling, childcare and rehabilitation; by establishing telephone helplines for women and girls who are victims of violence by taking the necessary legislation and other measures to prohibit compulsory and forced alternative dispute resolution processes, including forced mediation and conciliation, in relation to all forms of violence against women and girls; and by training of medical and social care professionals, security personnel, police, lawyers and judicial authorities on the social, psychological, physical and legal risks and consequences of violence;

F. Strengthening the role of civil society organizations, in particular women's and youth organizations, women's rights defenders, as well as of local authorities and local communities, in the efforts to eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls;

G. Recognizing the linkage between women's economic empowerment and the elimination of violence; developing entrepreneurship as a tool for women to gain economic independence and rehabilitation to a life free from violence; empowering women by boosting self-confidence, bringing them together in networks and making their voices stronger to stand-up for their rights.

III. Change in attitude and behaviour to attain gender equality with a view to promote women empowerment not only in rights but also in reality.

The Ministers agree that fighting stereotypes portrayal of women and men, and transforming social norms and attitudes are main components in ensuring the promotion of women's active role in society on equal footing with men. In this regard, Ministers agree to:

A. Promoting a balanced and non-stereotypical portraying of women and men in the media and in the education system, and raising consciousness of the society on gender equality with a view to promote women empowerment by organizing awareness and educational campaigns as well as training in schools targeting not only women and girls, but also men and boys, as well as

employers and employees of both public and private sector, to foster positive attitudes and behaviour and to ensure changes in the institutional behaviour with regard to women's rights and fundamental freedoms;

B. Designing and implementing national policies promoting a balanced and non-stereotypical roles of women and girls in society and combating trafficking and sexual exploitation of women and girls;

C. Promoting an effective partnership between the public and private sectors, employers, trade unions business and professional associations as well as civil society organizations, women's associations, and youth across the Euro-Mediterranean region in the dialogue aimed at improving the situation of women.

The Ministers of the UfM member states agree to establish an effective follow-up mechanism as a Euro-Mediterranean forum on strengthening the role of women in society to ensure an effective dialogue on women related policies, legislation and implementation. Ministers mandate senior officials/ experts to meet at least once a year to review the progress in translating the above commitments in laws and the implementation of measures contained in these conclusions, and provide report to UfM Senior Officials. The senior officials/experts will hold meetings to review progress on strengthening the role of women in society, taking into account the outcome of the consultations with the civil society.

In order to implement the measures agreed under the priority themes and bring the cooperation on strengthening the role of women in society to an operational level, Ministers, in accordance with their national policies, will support the development of projects in this area by relevant stakeholders, including civil society organisations, in particular through the identification of their needs for technical assistance and the improvement of a environment conducive to the implementation of such projects, including through the availability of appropriate funding. They welcome the projects labelled in the

UFM, as presented by the UFM Secretariat Progress report on Women Empowerment and Gender Equality and encourage Member States, regional and international organisations, as well as non-governmental organisations to submit concrete projects to the UfM labelling process by UfM Senior Officials and encourage the UfM Secretariat to identify sources of funding and facilitate access to funding of these projects.

The Ministers agree that the next Ministerial Conference on strengthening the role of women in society shall take place in 2016 as an opportunity to review and evaluate the progress made.

The Ministers express their gratitude to the Republic of France for hosting this Conference and all the efforts exerted to ensure its success.

Annex 2: List of interviewed persons

List of actors and experts who participated in the in-depth interviews

- **Ministers and Representatives of Ministries**

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Mr. Khaled Khalaldeh | Minister of Political and Parliamentary Affairs |
| Mr. Mohammad Thneibat | Minister of Education |
| Mr. Walid Maani | Former Minister of Health, Education and Higher Education |
| Ms. Muna Al-Rfou | Head of Gender Department Policies and Institution Development Department |
| Ms. Ghaida Emeish | Director of Quality Assurance of the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology |
| Ms. Hanan Syouf | Media director of the Ministry of Culture |

- **Senators and Members of Parliament**

| | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Ms. Amneh Al-Zoubi | Senator |
| Ms. Hayfa Al-Najar | Senator |
| Mr. Musa Maaitah | Senator |
| Mr. Wajeeh Azayzeh | Senator |
| Ms. Wejdan Al-Saket | Senator |
| Mr. Adnan Al-Sawaeer | Members of Parliament |
| Mr. Mustafa Hamarneh | Members of Parliament |
| Ms. Rula Al-Hroob | Members of Parliament |
| Ms. Wafa Bani Mustafa | Members of Parliament |

- **The Embassy of Republic of France to Jordan**

Ms. Caroline Dumas Ambassador of Republic of France to Jordan

- **EU Delegation to Jordan**

Ms. Joanna Wronecka Ambassador of the European Union to Jordan

- **Governors and Mayors**

Mr. Abd Al Kareem Al Rawajfeh Governor of Karak

Mr. Adel Al-Rousan Governor of Zarqa

Mr. Qasem Mhedat Governor of Mafraq

Mr. Akel Biltaji Mayor of Amman, Former Minister of
Tourism

Mr. Khaled Al-Khlefat Mayor of Tafileh

Mr. Theeban Al Rawahleh Mayor of Madaba

- **Leaders of political parties**

Ms. Abla Abu Elbeh General Secretary of the Jordanian
Democratic People's Party

Mr. Madalla Al-Tarawneh General Secretary of the Islamic
Moderate Party

Mr. Talal Al-Madi General Secretary of the Jordanian
United Front Party

- **Heads of Institutions**

Ms. Salma Nims Secretary General of Jordanian National
Commission for Women

Ms. Abeer Dababneh
Head of Academic Department-Women's
Studies Centre- University of Jordan
Centre of Women's Studies at the
University of Jordan

- **Leaders and Members of Human Rights and Women's Rights
Organizations, Academics and Journalists**

Ms. Asma Khader
Former Minister of Culture and Legal
Adviser of Sisterhood Global Institute
SIGI

Ms. Aroub Soubh
Journalist

Ms. Eva Abu Halaweh
Executive Director, Mizan Law Group for
Human Rights

Ms. Hadeel Abdel Aziz Ababneh
Executive Director at Justice Center for
Legal Aid, Jordan

Ms. Layla Naffa'
Program Director of Arab Women
Organization, Jordan

Ms. Majedah Ashour
Journalist

Ms. Nermeen Murad
Program Chief of Party USAID Takamol
- Gender Program

Mr. Salaheddin Al-Bashir
Former Minister of Industry and Trade,
Justice and Foreign Affairs, Senior
Partner at International Business Legal
Associates- IBLAW and Legal Studies
Chairman of the Board of Justice Center
for Legal Aid

Ms. Samar Dudin

Regional Director and Head of Programs
at Ruwwad Al Tanmeya

Ms. Samar Haddadin

Journalist

Annex 3: Questionnaire

Impact in Jordan of the Conclusions from the 3rd Euro-Med Ministerial Conference on “Strengthening the role of women in society”

Introduction:

The Euromed Feminist Initiative IFE-EFI is undertaking a study under the program of the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs MOPPA “Support to Democratic Governance in Jordan”.

The goal of this study is to evaluate the knowledge, perception and impact in Jordan of the Conclusions from the 3rd Euro-Med Ministerial Conference on “Strengthening the role of women in the society” that took place in Paris 2013.

Please kindly answer the following questions circling the number corresponding to your answer:

1. Age:

1. 18 – 29
2. 30 – 39
3. 40 – 49
4. 50 – 59
5. Over 59

2. Economic status:

1. Professional occupation (Specify)
2. Housewife (Or without profession)

3. Family Status:

1. Bachelor
2. Married
3. Divorced or separated
4. Widow

4. Place of residence:

1. Village
2. City/Outskirts Centre

3. Refugee Camp
4. Others
- 5. Nationality:**
 1. Jordan
 2. Palestine
 3. Other (Specify)
- 6. Religion:**
 1. Muslim
 2. Christian
 3. Other
- 7. How would you qualify women's rights and gender equality in Jordan?**
 1. As a social issue first
 2. As a political issue first
 3. As a private issue first
- 8. Do you think there is a change in regards to women's rights in the past 10 years?**
 1. Yes
 2. No
 3. I don't know
- 9. If yes, how do you estimate these changes?**
 1. Amelioration
 2. Regression
 3. Stagnation
- 10. What are according to you the main barriers to achieving gender equality in Jordan?**

(Scale from 1 to 5 on each where 1 is least important and 5 most important).

| Barrier to women's rights | Importance | | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------|----------------|
| | 1 Unimportant | 2 Slightly | 3 Moderately | 4 Very | 5 Extremely |
| Culture | | | | | |
| Traditions | | | | | |
| Religions | | | | | |
| Laws and policies | | | | | |
| Regional context | | | | | |
| Other | | | | | |

11. There are situations where discrimination based on gender is justified.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Agree
4. Strongly agree
5. I don't know

12. Have you heard about Euro-Mediterranean Istanbul-Marrakech process and its Ministerial Conclusions about women's rights?

1. Yes
2. No

If yes, how?

1. Via a women's rights organisation.
2. Via Friends
3. Via Media
4. Others (Specify)

Please have a look at the main measures from the Ministerial Conclusions below:

a) Equal participation of women and men in all spheres of life constitutes a fundamental and universal right as well as an indispensable precondition of sustainable socio-economic development and good democratic governance.

b) Increasing women's participation in the political decision-making

processes at all levels, including in situations of political transformation, by ensuring their freedom of movements, by promoting their participation in elections and in government; by promoting their active participation in local communities, in civil society organizations, as well as in national political life;

- c) Strengthening the citizenship status of women by ensuring women the right to equal protection by the law including equal rights with men to acquire, change or retain nationality and the possibility to transmit nationality to children.
- d) Promoting education as a tool for the prevention of all forms of violence against women by establishing trainings for all actors concerned by the fight against violence, such as public officials and civil servants, including judiciary, police, politicians, medical professionals, teachers, boys and girls at school; by engaging, educating and supporting men and boys to take responsibility for their behavior;
- e) Reducing disparities between rural and urban women and girls by ensuring access to education, to technical and vocational training, new technologies and to financial assistance and credits; by promoting women's entrepreneurship also in rural areas as well as by establishing and developing childcare and family support and services in remote rural areas;
- f) Promoting a balanced and non-stereotypical portraying of women and men in the media and in the education system, and raising consciousness of the society on gender equality with a view to promote women empowerment by organizing awareness and educational campaigns.

13. How do you perceive them?

1. As one more governmental statement
2. As an important tool to promote women's rights
3. I don't feel very concerned
4. I don't know

14. Among the major measures presented above, circle the one that needs to be implemented most urgently?

- a)
- b)
- c)
- d)
- e)
- f)

15. How do you perceive the role of Jordan in this Ministerial regional process?

- 1. Not sufficient
- 2. Increasing
- 3. Important
- 4. I don't know

16. Independently of the Ministerial Conclusions, what according to you would be two other measures that Jordan needed to take in the field of women's rights and gender equality?

- A)
- B)

